

LETTERS

FROM

EDINBURGH;

Written in the Years 1774 and 1775:

CONTAINING

SOME OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

Diversions, Customs, Manners, *and* Laws,

OF THE

SCOTCH NATION,

DURING A SIX MONTHS RESIDENCE IN
EDINBURGH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

Non hic centauros, non gorgona, harpyasque
Invenies, Hominem pagina nostra sapit.

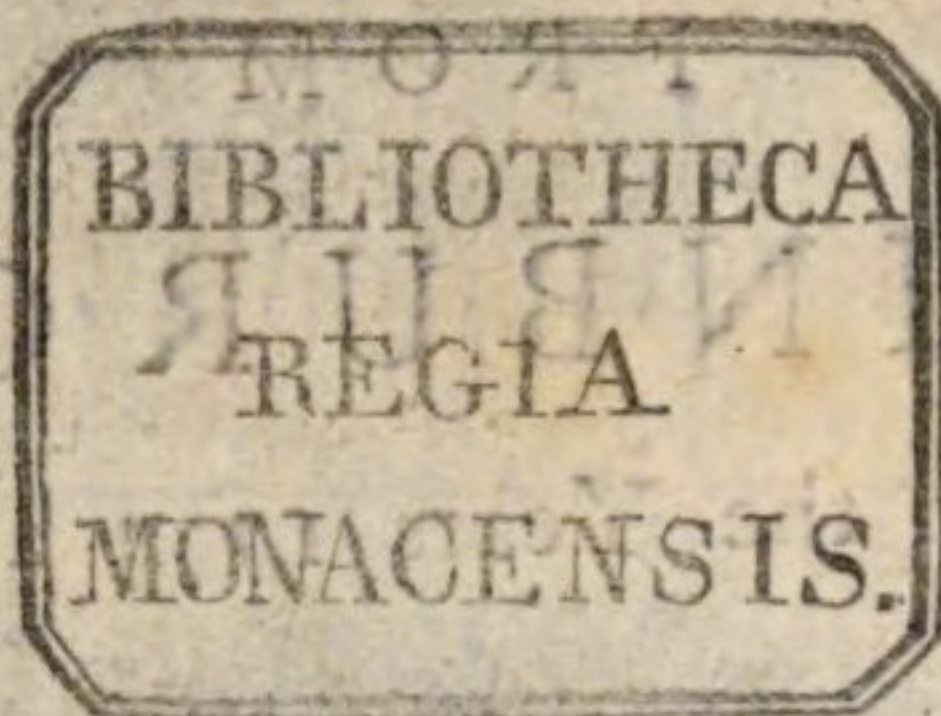
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267.D.

LETTERS



SOME OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

INFLUENCE OF THE

OF THE

SCOTCHMAN

BEING A SKETCH OF THE RESIDENCE IN

IN TWO VOLUMES

By the Author of the

VOL. I.

AND VOL. II.

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IN REMEMBRANCE
OF THE
MANY CIVILITIES
RECEIVED BY THE AUTHOR,
DURING HIS RESIDENCE IN
EDINBURGH;
THE FOLLOWING PAGES
ARE INSCRIBED TO THE
INHABITANTS OF THAT CITY,
BY
THEIR MOST OBEDIENT
AND MOST RESPECTFUL
HUMBLE SERVANT.

IN REMEMBRANCE
OF THE
MAYOR CIVILITIS
RECEIVED BY THE AUTHOR
DURING HIS RESIDENCE IN
E. D. I. N. B. U. R. G. H.
THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS
ARE INSCRIBED TO THE
INHABITANTS OF THAT CITY,
BY
THEIR MOST OBLIGED
AND MOST RESPECTFUL
HUMBLE SERVANT.

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P R E F A C E.

TH E Public are here presented with a Collection of Letters, which were not originally intended to be printed, but written in the familiar intercourse of private friendship. Some peculiar circumstances first suggested the idea of their publication. As many as were sufficient for the purpose were collected together: every personal circumstance that might have occurred in them blotted out; and they are now allowed to make their appearance with the per-

VOL. I.

B

mission

mission of those to whom they were addressed.

It will probably seem unnecessary, that any farther accounts of Scotland should be given, since two very respectable characters in the literary world have already communicated their travels to the Public. But the Author of these Letters begs leave to say, that the following pages do not contain a description of Scotland in general, but of Edinburgh alone: of its Customs, Laws, Entertainments; and in short, of all that relates to the manners of a polished people. They are the living and real sentiments of the Scotch upon various occasions.

Had these Letters contained an account of the Highlands or western islands of Scotland, nothing

thing more could have been said on those subjects, even to the people who admire them most: but there are others who wish to be acquainted, not only with the manners of the vulgar, but those of more refined sentiments, and which can alone be discovered in great cities. It is here where the passions of mankind exert their influence, where objects of power and grandeur excite their ambition, and where the mutual desire of pleasing awakens every faculty. Montequieu very justly says, “ Les
“ etrangers doivent toujours cher-
“ cher les grandes villes comme
“ une espece de patrie.” In passing over any country, very little more than the face of that country can be observed. Whatever forms the true character of a people, can only be known from residing amongst them; from be-

ing admitted familiarly into their houses; from viewing them in the social and unguarded hours of domestic retirement.

This advantage, and probably the only one, the Author of these Letters possessed, was not small; and should the public be indulgent enough to think that he has made that use of it he might have done, he will be amply gratified for the little trouble he may have had in collecting them together.

Some apology may probably seem necessary for the repetitions which will be found in some parts of these Letters; and which were unavoidable, as they were addressed to different people, and many of them on the same subject. Where it was in the Author's

thor's power to remove these objections, without new-modelling the Letters, he has done it: still, however, many other inaccuracies may occur that have escaped his observation, and for which he requests, with great humility, the candour of the Public. But, whatever may be their opinion, there is one thing the Author is bold to say—That he has indulged no ill-natured or illiberal reflections; but given, to the best of his understanding, the character of the people.—— Nations, as well as individuals, have their foibles; and though, in justice, he could not help observing them, he has considered them as the necessary shades to improve the picture: and he esteems himself peculiarly happy, that while he offers up this small token of his gratitude for the

many agreeable hours he has passed in Scotland, he can pay a just tribute to the merits of the Scotch nation.

SOME

S O M E
O B S E R V A T I O N S
O N T H E
D I V E R S I O N S, C U S T O M S, &c.
O F T H E
S C O T C H N A T I O N.
L E T T E R I.

*On the Approach to Edinburgh by the Road
through Dalkeith.*

To the Right Honourable Lord ———.

Edinburgh, November 5, 1774.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

S I N C E you last heard of
me, I have been strolling, according to my
usual custom, during the Summer months,
from place to place, contemplating the
beauties of the Tyne-side, (which indeed

abounds in beauties of every denomination) and from thence I took the opportunity of visiting the most northern parts, which I had never before seen, and which indeed I found more worthy the curiosity of a traveller, than any other part of England.

If I were to describe to you all the beauty, magnificence, and sublimity of Kefwick, I should be obliged to dwell so long on it, that, like the celebrated Duns Scotus, I might probably starve before I had finished my page, and inspire you with so great a curiosity of seeing the reality, that a man of your genius and taste for the great and picturesque productions of Nature, who has been an eye-witness to the charms of Italy, would immediately set off, and wonder they had escaped you so long. As I think also, that you must have met with Dr. Brown's comparison between Kefwick and Dove-dale, it would be needless for me to repeat after him, or to relate to you the wonders of that charming lake, which he has painted with all the graces of eloquent language. But there is one thing I cannot help mentioning, which I do not remember came under his observation; the extraordinary echo. As I was somewhat curious,

rious, I failed over the lake, and tried a number of different experiments on it; and found in one place, that it repeated the report of a pistol thirty distinct different times.——In some parts it was a quarter of a minute before the first echo, and the others followed at certain intervals.—The precise time between each echo was always the same in the same place, and the report of each echo was equally loud at different times of the day. The Lord of the manor receives a considerable profit from the black-lead ore that is found in the sand on the banks and edges of the lake, which is dug up here in spadefuls, and after sifting, the ore is picked out of it by the diligence of the labourer. The poor fellow that was employed there, and who was wading up to his middle in water, told me, that he gained a shilling for his day's work, and often was so successful as to dig up a quantity of lead that was worth a guinea.——I was fortunate enough to see the storming of an eagle's nest, which was built in the cleft of a rock that has been constantly employed for that purpose for many ages, notwithstanding it is destroyed every year. The man who took it was let down in a basket by a rope from the summit of the rock,

and combated with a sword the parent eagle, who fought valiantly in defence of her progeny. I purchased one of the young ones, which I hope will be no unacceptable present to your Lordship's menagerie. I beheld also the remarkable Solway moss, which gave me no small astonishment, and as you know I love horrid sights, I could not but wish to have been a spectator of this wonderful phenomenon, which spread itself over a whole country, a deluge of mud; and which,

Cum flavis messorem induceret arvis
 Agricola, et fragili jam stringeret hordea culmo;
 Jam gravidam latè segetem, ab radicibus imis
 Expulsam eruerit.

After passing through Westmoreland, I returned to Newcastle, and from thence proceeded to this place by Kelso, which is not more remarkable for a fine seat of the Duke of Roxborough, than for a romantic and delightful view of the Tweed, which here warbles along his rocky bed, and forms the most beautiful curve, that imagination can fancy; while his deep banks are skirted with trees and brushwood quite to the edges of the water. The country on this side
 Kelso

Kelfo is naked, vast, and in some places picturesque and pleasing ; though its great deficiency of wood is very disadvantageous to its appearance. There are indeed some few gentlemen's seats in view of the road, who are endeavouring to raise plantations of oak, ash, and firs, in straight rows, and sharp angles, after the manner of the English thirty years ago ; from which I suppose they are not yet arrived at that true taste and elegance which now distinguishes the parks of our countrymen * : though, at a few miles from this place, I saw at some distance a seat of Lord Abercorn, which seems to be laid out in more modern taste. I passed by Dalkeith, the seat of the Duke of Buccleugh, which I am informed is well worth seeing ; but as I shall have many opportunities hereafter of examining every part of it, at present I only surveyed the environs and adjacent country, which has the appearance of richness, fertility, and good agriculture. There seem to be delightful vallies, murmuring rivulets, and a wildness about every landscape, which,
from

* A future Letter will shew how much the author was deceived, and how much he changed his opinion.

from the novelty, is agreeable and entertaining to the eye. From Dalkeith to Edinburgh the scene is beautifully diversified. On one side a ridge of cragged mountains, bare indeed, but grand, and of a sublime aspect: on the other, a rich and finely-cultivated compagna extends itself quite to the sea, checquered with farms, villages, trees, and water; whilst the sea-shore is crowned in a serpent form by Leith, Inveresk, and Musselborough. After a short progress on the ascent of the hill

*Largior hic campos æther et lumine vestit
Purpureo;*

and the City of Edinburgh presents itself to the eye, and forms a magnificent picture, with the River Firth, Arthur's Seat, and Salisbury Craigs; the horizon on the other side the Firth being bounded by lofty mountains, whose heads are covered with snow, or concealed amidst the clouds. I reached this place but last night, so that you cannot expect more than a general account, with which I am afraid I have exhausted your patience; but you may blame yourself for wishing to

to hear from me so soon.—Be assured,
in whatever climate I am found, my
good wishes are ever with you, and that
I remain

Your Lordship's most affectionate friend,

and most obliged, humble servant.

LETTER

LETTER II.

Situation of Edinburgh, Wynds, and Clofes.

To R. D. Esq;

Edinburgh, November 12, 1774.

S I R,

THE many obligations I owe to your acquaintance, and the politeness you shewed me during my stay at Paris, make it impossible for me to deny any request you make. I comply, therefore, with your desire in sending you some account of this City. I know you have read Mr. Pennant's Tour thro' the Highlands; and I can assure you from my own knowledge, you need not wish for better information: it is an accurate and ingenious performance; and, what is the best and truest test of its merit, equally esteemed in this country as in England.

The situation of Edinburgh is probably as extraordinary an one as can well be imagined for a metropolis. The immense hills, on which great part of it is built, though they make the views uncommonly magnificent,

magnificent, not only in many places render it impassable for carriages, but very fatiguing for walking. The principal or great street runs along the ridge of a very high hill, which, taking its rise from the palace of Holyrood House, ascends, and not very gradually, for the length of a mile and a quarter, and after opening a spacious area, terminates in the castle. On one side, far as the eye can reach, you view the sea, the port of Leith, its harbour and various vessels, the river of Firth, the immense hills around, some of which ascend above even the Castle; and on the other side you look over a rich and cultivated country, terminated by the dark, abrupt, and barren hills of the Highlands.

You have seen the famous street of Lille, la Rue royale, leading to the port of Tournay, which is said to be the finest in Europe; but which I can assure you is not to be compared either in length or breadth to the High Street at Edinburgh: and would they be at the expence of removing some buildings which obstruct the view, by being placed in the middle of the street, nothing could be conceived more magnificent. Not content, however, with this, they suffer a
weekly

weekly market to be held, in which stalls are erected nearly the whole length of it, and make a confusion almost impossible to be conceived. All sorts of iron and copper ware are exposed to sale; here likewise the herb market is held, and the herb women, who are in no country either the most peaceable or the most cleanly beings upon earth, throw about the roots, stalks, &c. of the bad vegetables, to the great nuisance of the passengers.

The style of building here is much like the French: the houses, however, in general are higher, as some rise to twelve, and one in particular to thirteen stories in height. But to the front of the street nine or ten stories is the common run; it is the back part of the edifice which, by being built on the slope of an hill, sinks to that amazing depth so as to form the above number. This mode of dwelling, though very proper for the turbulent times to which it was adapted, has now lost its convenience: as they no longer stand in need of the defence from the castle, they no more find the benefit of being crowded together so near it. The common staircase which leads to the apartments of the different inhabitants, must always be dirty, and is in general

neral very dark and narrow. It has this advantage, however, that as they are all of stone, they have little to apprehend from fire, which, in the opinion of some, would more than compensate for every other disadvantage. In general, however, the highest and lowest tenements are possessed by the artificers, while the gentry and better sort of people dwell in fifth and sixth stories.

In London you know such an habitation would not be deemed the most eligible, and many a man in such a situation would not be sorry to descend a little lower. The style of building here has given rise to different ideas: Some years ago a Scotch gentleman, who went to London for the first time, took the uppermost story of a lodging house, and was very much surprised to find what he thought the genteelest place in the whole at the lowest price. His friends who came to see him, in vain acquainted him with the mistake he had been guilty of; "*He ken'd vary weel,*" he said, "*what gentility was, and when he lived all his life in a sixth story, he was not come to London to live upon the groond.*"

From

From the right of the High-street you pass over a very long bridge to the New Town. Before this bridge was built you had a very steep hill to descend and to ascend, which was found extremely inconvenient. A subscription therefore was entered into to build one; and a most stupendous work it is indeed; it is thrown over this immense valley; and by having no water run under it, you have the whole effect of its height. From it, you have a fine view up and down the vale, and the prospect through the middle arch is inconceivably beautiful. Not long ago a part of this bridge gave way, and many people who were upon it sunk into the chasm, and were buried in the ruins. Many others, who were likewise upon the bridge, saw the fate of their unfortunate companions, without being able to assist them. All was terror and consternation; every one fled from this scene of death as fast as possible, expecting the bridge to sink under them at every step, and themselves to be crushed to pieces. When the bridge was cleared, and the general consternation had a little subsided, it was found that only a small part had given way; which they are now repairing, and making stronger than ever. But so
great

great was the fear it occasioned amongst all ranks of people, that many of them look upon it with terror even to this day, and make it an objection to residing in the New Town, that they must necessarily pass over it.

The New Town has been built upon one uniform plan, which is the only means of making a city beautiful. Great part of this plan as yet remains to be executed, though they proceed as fast as their supplies of money will allow them. The rent of the houses in general amount to 100l. per annum, or upwards, and are most of them let to the inhabitants by builders, who buy the ground, and make what advantage they can of it. The greatest part of the New Town is built after the manner of the English, and the houses are what they call here, "houses to themselves." Though this mode of living, one would imagine, is much preferable to the former, yet such is the force of prejudice, that there are many people who prefer a little dark confined tenement on a sixth story, to the convenience of a whole house. One old lady fancies she should be lost if she was to get into such an habitation; another, that she should be blown away in going

ing over the new bridge; and a third lives in the old style, because she is sure that these new fashions can come to "nae gude. But different as these sentiments are in regard to living, they are not more different than the buildings themselves. In no town that I ever saw can such a contrast be found betwixt the modern and antient architecture, or any thing that better merits the observation of a stranger.

The pavement of the whole town is excellent: the granite, which long supplied London till Jersey and Guernsey robbed them of those advantages, is dug from the hills close to the town, and brought at very small expence. Maitland, in his history of this town, calls it "grey marble;" but without disputing about the propriety of the name, every one must allow it the very best stone possible for the purpose. They finish it with an exactness which the London workmen are indifferent about, and which indeed London would not admit of, from the number of weighty carriages that continually go over it.

From the left of the High-street you pass down by a number of different allies, or as they call them here, Wynds
and

and Clofes, to the different parts of the old town. They are many of them fo very fteep, that it requires great attention to the feet to prevent falling; but fo well accuftomed are the Scotch to that pofition of body required in defcending thefe declivities, that I have feen a Scotch girl run down them with great fwiftnefs in pattens.

This town has long been reproached with many uncleanly customs. A gentleman, who lately publifhed his travels thro' Spain, fays, "that Madrid, fome years ago, might have vied with Edinburgh in filthinefs." It may probably be fome pleafure to this author, and to thofe who read him, to learn that his remarks are now very erroneous.

But if a ftranger may be allowed to complain, it would be, that in thefe wynds, which are very numerous, the dirt is fuffered to remain two or three days without removal, and becomes offensive to more fenfes than one. The magiftrates, by impofing fines and other punifhments, have long put a ftop to the throwing any thing from the windows into the open ftreet: but as thefe allies

allies are unlighted, narrow, and removed from public view, they still continue these practices with impunity. Many an elegant suit of clothes has been spoiled ; many a powdered, well dressed maccaroni sent home for the evening : and to conclude this period in Doctor Johnson's own simple words, " Many a " full flowing perriwig moistened into " flaccidity *."

Such particulars, however, as these scarce merit observation : they are circumstances resulting from the peculiar inconveniency of the buildings, and not from the natural disposition of the Scotch, who love cleanliness and practise it. They lament the impropriety of these customs, and join in the laugh at the accidents they occasion.

It has been the misfortune of almost every nation to be prejudged at a distance, or to be visited by a number of men whose resolutions are too strong for conviction. They come with a fixed idea, that the Scotch are a dirty people : they probably meet with some person

* Vide Idler.

person who is so, and would be so in any country, and away they hurry back, and give, as they think, the just character of the whole nation. It has been the peculiar fortune of the Scotch to have been thus treated: but they are a sensible and ingenious people, and look upon these hasty censures in the manner they deserve. But to you, who are “*Nul-
lius addictus jurare in verba magistri,*” and who are bigotted to no particular customs, I make no scruple of declaring, that this metropolis is not, as some of our countrymen please to say, dirty and disagreeable; but adorned with many elegant and beautiful structures, the seat of several of the most ingenious men in Europe, and who are an honour to the age they live in, abounding in many of the politer embellishments of life, and well deserving the attention of a traveller.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER III.

*On the bad Accommodations for Strangers in
Edinburgh.*

A Monsieur, Monsieur V. à Paris.

Edinburgh, November 15, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

SINCE my last, which I delivered to your son, when I had the pleasure of seeing him in London, I have been a great traveller ; and am now set down in Edinburgh for the winter season. I must confess I already shudder at the thoughts of this northern climate, and look with some apprehensions on the approach of cold weather ; the severity of which, I doubt, the feebleness of my constitution will with difficulty be able to combat. However, I am in a tolerable comfortable habitation at present, and have fortunately procured an apartment

ment somewhat elevated indeed, but commodious, and in a good situation. In a city so large as Edinburgh, the size of which you may easily conjecture from its being the metropolis of Scotland, I make no manner of doubt but you must be surpris'd to hear me consider myself as fortunate, in having found out a lodging, where I can sleep without molestation, and where I am neither poisoned by stench, or suffocated for want of air. A person like you, who has always been accustomed to meet with downy pillows, and splendid apartments, in the hotels of Paris and Lyons, can scarcely form in imagination the distress of a miserable stranger on his first entrance into this city : as there is no inn that is better than an ale-house, nor any accommodation that is decent, cleanly, or fit to receive a gentleman. On my first arrival, my companion and self, after the fatigue of a long day's journey, were landed at one of these stable-keepers (for they have modesty enough to give themselves no higher denomination) in a part of the town which is called the Pleasance ; and on entering the house, we were conducted by a poor devil of a girl without shoes or stockings, and with only a single linsy-woolsey

fey-woolsey petticoat, which just reached half way to her ankles, into a room where about twenty Scotch drovers had been regaling themselves with whisky and potatoes. You may guess our amazement, when we were informed, ‘ that this was ‘ the best inn in the metropolis—that ‘ we could have no beds, unless we had ‘ an inclination to sleep together, and in ‘ the same room with a company which ‘ a stage-coach had that moment discharg- ‘ ed.’ Well, said I to my friend (for you must know that I have more patience on these occasions than wit on any other) there is nothing like seeing men and manners, perhaps we may be able to repose ourselves at some coffee-house. Accordingly, on inquiry, we discovered that there was a good dame by the Cross, who acted in the double capacity of pouring out coffee, or letting lodgings to strangers, as we were. She was easily to be found out; and with all the conciliating complaisance of a *Maîtreſſe d’Hotel*, conducted us to our destined apartments; which were indeed six stories high, but so infernal to appearance, that you would have thought yourself in the regions of Erebus.

The

The truth of this, I will venture to say, you will make no scruple to believe, when I tell you, that in the whole we had only two windows, which looked into an alley five feet wide, where the houses were at least ten stories high, and the alley itself was so sombre in the brightest sunshine, that it was impossible to see any object distinctly. And now I am in the story-telling humour, I cannot omit giving you an account of an adventure which happened here very lately to a friend of mine ; as it tallies in some measure with what I have already related, and serves to confirm the wretchedness of accommodation which must be put up with in this city. A gentleman from London, who had been appointed to some duty in a public office, came to Edinburgh, and having no friends to furnish him with a bed, and few acquaintances to give him any assistance, found himself obliged to conceal himself in one of these dark abodes, in order to be nigh the centre of the town, where his employment compelled him to pass most part of the day. As he perceived his lodgings as good as his neighbours, it induced him to continue there, until he discovered himself extreme-

ly weak and emaciated, occasioned by constant violent perspirations in which he waked every morning. The observations, which some of his associates made on the alteration of his *embonpoint*, and the situation to which he was reduced (for from a stout and lusty man, he was now become a mere shadow) persuaded him to think himself extremely ill and in a consumption. Accordingly he sent for the professor, and another or two of the learned fraternity; who, with all the significance of pompous physic, pronounced him to be in a very declining state, and administered every restorative which the Esculapian art could suggest or supply. But all without effect: he still continued to grow worse; and at length, almost totally exhausted, and giving himself a prey to despair, he sent up for his landlady to be a witness to his will; who, much concerned for the melancholy event, and with tears in her eyes, said, “How unfortunate she had been since she kept house; that her two former lodgers had died with her; that she was sure she did every thing to serve them all; that, for her part, she always took care that their linen was well aired; and as for rooms, nothing could be
“drier

“ drier or more free from dampness ; that
“ her neighbour, good man, was a baker,
“ and his oven was directly under them ;
“ that she was sure, therefore, they must
“ be warm, and it was impossible to
“ catch cold in her house.”——“ Good
“ God,” cried the gentleman, “ an oven
“ under my room ! no wonder I am in
“ a consumption after having been baked
“ for these three months.” Upon which
he sent for the baker, and found what
she said was really true ; that the oven
was immediately under his bed, and that
the decrease of his health had been in
proportion to the increase of the baker’s
business. The discovery therefore being a
much better medicine than any the pro-
fessors could prescribe, he quitted this *en-*
fer, by degrees recovered his strength and
constitution, and lives now to ridicule the
oddity of the accident. After all this, I
am sure you will agree with me, that ’tis
extremely strange, that a city, which is a
thoroughfare into all Scotland, and now little
inferior to London in politeness in many re-
spects, should not be better furnished with
conveniencies for strangers, or have a public
lodging-house, where you can find tolera-
ble entertainment. But it really has not :
and I am the more surpris’d at it ; as,

in their manner of living, and many customs, I think the inhabitants much resemble the French. But in this particular what a difference between this place and Paris! where in a minute you may be provided with a house equal to one of the greatest nobility, with servants, equipage, and all the luxuries of elegance and taste; while at Edinburgh, without an inn to put your head into, and without a lodging that you can breathe in, you are obliged to bless your stars to get any place to repose yourself, till better fortune, or better acquaintance, have interest enough to procure it you in some private house.—It is a pity—it is a disgrace to the country; and I should hope, ere long, the pride or good sense of Scotland will so far prevail, as to establish an Hotel in some suitable part of the town, to obviate the inconvenience of the want of these necessaries. For an example and pattern she need go no further than the metropolis of her sister kingdom; where Mr. Lowe's endeavours to merit the applause of the public have been crowned with universal approbation. But I am trespassing on your time. How much I am obliged to you for your letter, I am informed enough by Mr. Le M——e, but
more

more by my own feelings. And as I am assured that you are more pleased to oblige your friends than to receive their thanks, I will only say, that mine are very sensible ; and that no man is with more reason, and with more sincerity, than I am,

Your ever affectionate friend,

and obedient humble servant.

LETTER IV.

The Description of the Town, &c. &c.

To. W. T. Esq.

Edinburgh, November 20, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

YOUR sentiments on the taste of the present time in architecture and ornamental buildings, perfectly correspond with mine; and I agree with you, that we have made a greater progress towards excellence, in a few years, in this, than we have done in other arts, that perhaps are of greater utility to mankind. For the one I can easily account; namely, from our close imitation of the antique; from our adopting certain forms, figures, dimensions, and colours, which the politest people that ever existed, esteemed the most, when they had arrived at the utmost summit of civilization and luxury. The present mode of colouring ceilings and rooms can never be too much admired;

admired; and the paleness of the tints gives to their appearance much grace, ease, and modesty, blended with a certain degree of grandeur and dignity, which seem to take no pains to shew themselves. For this, as for many other things, London is indebted to a native of Scotland. Messrs. Adams, if I am not mistaken, were the first who introduced this manner; when the Adelphi, which will present a pattern of architecture to ages to come, disclosed the genius of those great masters. But you ask me if this improvement has advanced so far North as this country. I wish I could answer you in the affirmative. I see nothing of it, either in their new buildings, or in their ornaments. The situation of the Old Town renders it hardly worth while making any alteration in the style of furniture, or finishing apartments; every house having the appearance of a lodging. You will be sensible of this, if I give you a short description of the old city of Edinburgh, which I hope will afford you some entertainment; as I know you are a perfect stranger to it. The principal street of Edinburgh is situated on the ridge or *dorsum* of a hill, which rises gradually, and abruptly terminates in a

vast pile of rocks, on which the Castle is built, in 55 degrees north latitude, and in 3 degrees of west longitude. At the foot of it is Holyroodhouse, the elevation of which, from the high water mark at Leith, is 94 feet, and from thence to the Castle 180: that the elevation of the whole hill is 274 feet. The other principal streets are parallel to this, on the south side, at the bottom of the hill, and are called the Cowgate and Grass market. Tradition says, the Cowgate, two hundred years ago, was the polite part of the town; and in it were the houses of the Nobility, and the Senators of the College of Justice; but, at present, the buildings are much inferior to those on the top of the hill. The original town has been fortified, is surrounded by a wall, and has nine ports. The buildings are all of them of stone of a brown cast, and those in the high street extremely elevated, especially behind, where some of them are ten or twelve stories; and one, I think, is said to be thirteen, as they all formerly were, before a conflagration, which happened A. D. 1690. The reason the buildings are so much higher than towards the street, is on account that they are situated on the edge

edge of the hill, in order that the street might be wider, and take up the whole of the ridge, which is about thirty yards across. These buildings are divided by extremely thick partition walls, into large houses, which are here called lands, and each story of a land is called a house. Every land has a common staircase, in the same manner as the inns of court in London, and houses in Paris; from whence, it is most probable, this custom was taken. As each house is occupied by a family, a land, being so large, contains many families; that I make no manner of doubt but that the High street in Edinburgh is inhabited by a greater number of persons than any street in Europe. The ground floors and cellars are in general made use of for shops by the tradesmen; who here style themselves Merchants, as in France; and the higher houses are possessed by the genteeler people. The merchants here also, as in France, have the horrid custom of painting on the outside of their houses, the figure of the commodity which is to be sold within; which, in this place, makes the oddest appearance you can conceive; for each story, perhaps, from top to bottom, is chequered with ten thousand different forms and colours; that

that the whole resembles the stall of a fair, presenting, at one view, the goods of a variety of shops. They are likewise remarkably fond of glaring colours; as red, yellow, and blue, on which the figures are painted in black. You would laugh to see a black quartern loaf directly over a black full trimmed perriwig of a professor, with a Cheshire cheese, and a rich firkin of butter, displayed in black greasiness under stays, petticoats, and child-bed linen. The principal edifices in Edinburgh are the Castle, Holyroodhouse, the Infirmary, and Heriot's Hospital. The Castle, I find, was erected by Edwin king of Northumberland, A. D. 626, who gave it the name of Edwin's Burgh, or Edwin's Castle; and is mentioned by Simeon of Durham, in his book, intitled, *De Gest. Regum Ang. ad annum 854*. It is situated in the northern part of Mid Lothian, two miles south of the Firth of Forth, and is fortified in an extreme strong manner, three sides of the rock on which it is founded being perpendicular. Within the walls is an armoury and barracks for soldiers: and a very large garrison is generally quartered there. But before I proceed any further, I must entreat you to take a view of the prospect from
the

the top of the Castle, which, perhaps, is the most picturesque and beautiful of any that can be found in Europe. If there is any deficiency in the whole, it is the want of a forest, or some large tract of wooded country; for, in all other respects, nothing was ever formed more pleasing to the eye.

The Palace of Holyroodhouse is a stone building, of one square, surrounded by a piazza. The front of it consists of two towers, joined by a low building or gallery, in the middle of which is a portico, that supports a cupola in form of a crown.

In the gallery on the north side of the square, are the portraits of all the Scotch Kings: the rest of the house is divided into the Great Council chamber, and apartments for the Nobility, like Somerset house in London.

Holyroodhouse was originally a monastery, called *Sanctæ Crucis*, and founded by David I. It was destroyed by the English about the middle of the sixteenth century, and nothing left but the church, to which James V. A. D. 1528, added a palace, which

which Charles II. 1674, augmented. It is a heavy ugly fabric, and has so little the appearance of a palace, that you may well apply to it, what the Cavaliero Bernini said of the Louvre, that it is *Una gran piccola cosa*. It has a park walled in, three miles in circumference, and consisting of two hills; one rising into three tops, the highest of which is called Arthur's Seat; and Salisbury Craigs, a semicircular body of rocks, resembling a ruinous amphitheatre.

Arthur's Seat is interpreted Ard-na-faid, or the Height of Arrows, from its being adapted to that sport. The view from it, though more extensive, is not so pleasing as that from the Castle, on account of its great height. The hill on which the Old Town is situated, with the Castle at its extremity, appears from it, like the back and head of some animal, whilst the steeples, spires, and chimnies bristle on it,

“ Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.”

Heriot's Hospital is a large and magnificent edifice, and has infinitely more the look of a palace than Holyroodhouse. It
was

was founded by one George Heriot, a merchant in Edinburgh, and was begun to be built A. D. 1628; but stopt during the troubles in Great Britain, and it was nearly finished A. D. 1650, when it was taken possession of by the English army under the command of Oliver Cromwell, who converted it into an infirmary for the use of his men, and in whose possession it remained till A. D. 1658, when it was restored to the governors, who prepared it for the reception of children who are fatherless, freemen's sons of the City of Edinburgh. It now contains 150 boys, who are under the care of a treasurer, and proper masters to prepare them for business, or qualify them to be sent bursars to the College, with an annual stipend of five pounds a-year. This building cost twenty-seven thousand pounds, and the sum left by the founder forty three thousand six hundred pounds.

Thus, in as few words as possible, I have endeavoured to give you a faint idea of the Old City of Edinburgh, and I have added those buildings which I thought best worth your knowledge. As it is one of the most populous places of its size in the known world, you may conjecture how crowded

crowded it must be, and how little room for elegance and a superfluity of luxurious ornaments. But the New Town is in a very different style of architecture: the account of which I shall reserve till another opportunity; in the mean time, if you blame me for ingrossing so much of your time, you must lay the whole fault on your own letter; or rather on my not having heard of you before for so long a time, “and that strong propensity of my nature to re-assume my old correspondence, just as a man does an old love, which lies still deep at heart, however diverted or discontinued.”

Believe me, with great truth,

your most affectionate friend,

and obliged, humble servant.

LETTER

LETTER V.

On Salutations on Introduction to Strangers.

To the Honourable W. S——, Esq;

Edinburgh, November 26, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

AMONGST the number of ancient customs which have been handed down to us from past ages, and which are frequently to be met with on the Continent, the Scotch have one, which has been long out of fashion in England, though it formerly existed there; that of salutation on introduction to strangers.— That this was a custom of the Romans, is evident from a variety of authors, particularly from Ovid, who speaks of it in his usual rapturous manner; “Gratatus—
“que darem cum dulcibus oscula verbis.” It is at present common among the Venetians, and practised in many parts of France. That it was usual among the English, appears from many passages of the history of England; and that it was
once

once more so than on the continent, is plain from some lines of the celebrated Erasmus, in an epistle to Faustus Adrelinus, the Poet laureat: where this great philosopher, in an amorous mood, invites his friend, in the following strain, to repair immediately to Great-Britain, for the sake of conversing with the female inhabitants of the country; “Sunt hîc nymphæ divinis vultibus, blandæ, faciles, et quas tu tuis Camœnis facile anteponas. Est præterea mos nunquam fatis laudatus: si ve quo venias, omnium osculis exciperis, si ve discedas aliquo, osculis dimitteris; redis, redduntur suavia; venit ad te, propinantur suavia; discedit abs te, dividuntur basia; occurritur alibi, basiatur affatim; denique quocunque te moveas, suaviorum plena sunt omnia.” The warmth and energy of his expression I should think was a plain proof, that the custom was not only agreeable, but new; which gives me much surprize, since Montaigne and other French writers mention it as having always been the mode of introduction in their country; which if it had, it could never have escaped Erasmus, who was so conversant with its manners and inhabitants. But the illustrious Essayist is far from being of the same opinion

opinion with him: he censures the custom as disgusting and disagreeable, and derives from it many ill consequences: which is no matter of wonder, when I am informed that he had lived above half a century at the time he gave his opinion, and consequently had reached that period of life, which is too cold and inanimate to be affected by possession, much more by a single touch of a hand or a lip. He speaks, therefore, as fatiated, and as all old people do, who have lost their relish and enjoyment of those pleasures which are derived from passion: whereas Erasmus was but in his thirtieth year, in the full meridian of manhood; in a country too where the women rival the rest of the universe in beauty: how could he then but commend a custom so favourable to ideas which inspire the mind with delight, enthusiasm, and love? I do not know any greater proof of the superior beauty of our countrywomen, than that they could fire the cold and lifeless soul of a Dutchman to exclaim, “*Suaviorum plena sunt omnia;*” and yet I think he deserved every thing their beauty could grant, who could describe what he felt from its effect, in such delightful and elegant language, and was so sensible of their excelling charms.

charms. When I consider the *divinis, blandæ, exciperis, dimitteris, redduntur & propinantur suavia, dividuntur, affatim*, and that delicious *moveas*, parent of the inchanting *Suaviorum plena sunt omnia*; I cannot but admire the continued vigour of the sentence; where there is nothing forced, nothing languishing and feeble, but the genuine voice of nature and eloquence.—

“Contextus totus virilis est, non sunt circa flosculos occupati.” The sense illuminates and produces the words; not words of air, but of strength and manliness, signifying more than they express. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the history of Erasmus, to tell in what part of Great-Britain the ladies drew from him such high encomiums; but I should imagine he applied it to the Scotch ladies, as he spent a considerable time in Scotland, was rhetoric tutor to one of the king’s sons, and afterwards archbishop of St. Andrew’s: besides, the custom was always more prevalent here than in England. But the reason which weighs most is, that he mentions the Scotch women in other parts of his work, in the most favourable terms; and proves, from his warm and animated expressions, that he was not insensible, though a philosopher and an archbishop, to

to that beauty which is peculiar to this country, and which is so extreme, that a salute is almost invaluable. After having quoted so learned an authority in favour of this custom, you may think it presumption in me to offer any thing against it; but I cannot help saying, however delightful it may be to the male part of our species, however productive of tender and agreeable sensations, they ought to consider that it very seldom happens that the salute is a voluntary one, and it frequently is the cause of disgust and embarrassment to the fair sex. But the strongest circumstances against it is, that by the constant practice of it, it takes away that amiable modesty, that “*metuitque tangi*” “*nuptiraum expers*,” which is one of the most enchanting allurements, and gives them an appearance of forwardness and boldness in their address, which borders on indelicacy. When I see a beautiful girl of sixteen approaching to be saluted by a row of strangers, it always gives me an idea of tasting before you bid; and removes from my imagination that *semi-reducta* appearance, which Ovid, the great master of the Art of Love, mentions as so pleasing in the figure of Venus, and so essential to real beauty. I think nothing
need

need be said more in dispraise of any custom, than that it diminishes the appearance of modesty in the fair sex; which, in the language of a celebrated author, “gives
“a maid greater beauty than even the
“bloom of youth, bestows on the wife
“the dignity of a matron, and re-instates
“the widow in her virginity.” But there is one other charm of which it deprives them, and by so doing, is very detrimental to society, by stealing from lovers and husbands a pleasure, in which there is no little delight and enjoyment: the young ladies become so habituated to salutes, and by experience so practised in their manœuvres, that their sensations are perfectly hebetated and dull; and, instead of finding those emotions and satisfactions which the breath of an innamorato inspires in other countries, the warmest embraces, and most fervent kiss can make no impression on their affection, nor is able to rouse the latent spark of sensibility and desire. By this means, love loses half its artillery. The passions of the men are inflamed: they rush forward to unnatural modes of seduction, and, by every desperate contrivance, endeavour “to rob the
“tender virgins of their hearts.”

Consider

Consider also, you who are blessed with every conjugal endearment, how languid and insipid must be the marriage bed, when incapable of deriving pleasures from this source? For surely there is no finer sensation than the electric fire which is communicated by the lips of the object of our affection; except that of knowing that it is reciprocal: and yet much fewer evils are brought on mankind by this effect of salutations, than if they operated in a contrary manner; for then, I believe, that the married gentlemen in particular would have greater cause to lament, were we by any means to endeavour to increase the natural sensibility of the ladies: so that we must still agree with Doctor Pangloss's system; and, though we may experience many disagreeable things in this variegated world, confess, after all, "that every thing is for the best."

I remain your ever affectionate friend,

and obliged, humble servant.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

Character of the Scotch in some Points mistaken.—Some Observations upon them.

To R. D. Esq;

Edinburgh, December 2, 1774.

S I R,

TH E civilities that have been paid to my fellow-traveller and me, the politeness we have met with, and the attentions with which we have been honoured since our arrival, all conspire to make this country every day more agreeable. At first I was afraid we should become too popular; but that fear has now subsided, and we walk along without notice.

The common people of this place, who had only seen travellers pass through, like birds of passage in their way to the Highlands or Hebrides, were astonished to find two people become stationary at Edinburgh

burgh for a whole winter. “What were we come for?” was the first question. —“They presumed to study physic?” —“No.” “To study law?” “No.” —“Then it must be divinity?” “No.” —“Very odd,” they said, “that we should come to Edinburgh without one of these reasons.” —At one time we were supposed to be hair-dressers, at another mountebanks, at a third, players. Whilst this supposition lasted, we were in great repute. A thousand people, who would have let us pass unnoticed as peaceable and quiet gentlemen, the moment they imagined we might some day exhibit before them, naturally concluded we must have something very curious about us, and that they had a right to look at us. In short, we have undergone as many changes as Proteus, in the imaginations of other people. One very pious lady, who had long been torturing her invention to no purpose, concluded we could have come for no good, and very charitably wished we were well out of the place. In spite of all these conjectures, however, here we are, and here we are likely to remain for some time. Our pride, at least, will not let us remove till we have convinced them, “that we are no spies, but true
VOL. I. D “men,”

“men.” If they did themselves justice, they would have no reason to be surprised. Is it so strange and unnatural, that Englishmen should visit Scotland? or that, when they are there, they should have no inclination to leave it?

I have not as yet been long enough in this country to have formed many observations on the manners of the people; but the general opinion which the English entertain, that they are laborious and economical, seems to be very erroneous. The common people, who, as long as the Clans subsisted, were entirely governed by martial laws, and from their infancy attached to arms, and who knew no other ambition but that of signaling themselves in contests for their lairds, could feel no predilection for one spot of ground, nor possess any settled habitation. No one would be inclined to throw away his labour in cultivating a barren and thankless soil, when he was liable to be robbed of the fruits of his industry every moment. This insecurity of property soon introduced an hereditary aversion to labour; and they preferred trusting to what force or stratagem might bring them, rather than to a patient course of industry, which was so
subject

subject to be interrupted. In no country whatever, where the love of arms is predominant, the people are known to be fond of agriculture. A Roman consul might possibly go from the plough to command an army; but supposing it to be true, it is only an exception, not a rule. The spirit which actuates a soldier is no more adapted to make a good farmer, than the spot, which is the subject of contention, can be favourable to the labours of the husbandman. *Auferre, trucidare, rapere, falsis nominibus, belli gloriâ, atque ubi solitudinem facit, pacem appellat.* Such is the character which Tacitus gives of this military spirit, and he had many opportunities of observing its effects.

Though the dissolution of the Clans, and some little improvements that have been made, have in some measure broke this general contempt for labour, which the Highlanders once entertained, they are still what a Dutchman, or even an Englishman would call very idle. An Highlander will, to this day, wrap himself up in his plaid, throw himself at his length on the ground, and lie there totally unconcerned, while his wife and children are busily employed in getting in the scanty

harvest which the barren nature of his land allows him. He will neither fully his dignity nor his hands in such dirty work. It is in vain to oppose these national prejudices with argument; for reason, and even interest sink before them. Every people have some of them, and many of them boast of these absurdities as honourable distinctions. The Spanish writers tell you, with great marks of applause, that their monarch, Philip IV. never made the least motion with his eyes in giving audience, nor was ever seen to laugh in his whole life. Is it not almost incredible that human folly could ever have been carried to such a length?

Though the tradesmen and artists of this country now begin to feel the benefits of industry, they are far from being frugal: in general they live up to the amount of their incomes; and you see as many bankruptcies in proportion in an Edinburgh Newspaper, as you do in a London Gazette. Here likewise, as in London, they know the art of extracting advantage from ruin; and frequently find, as a witty writer observes, 'that a commission of bankruptcy is the best commission they could have.' This early introduction of
luxury

luxury and dissipation is somewhat extraordinary. When people have acquired some degree of fortune, by a toilsome and unbroken course of industry, they understand in general the value of money too well ever to be tempted to throw it away again. As yet they have had no immense riches accumulated by trade, nor any nabobs to introduce eastern modes of luxury; so that this premature taste for dissipation is not so easy to be accounted for. The people of landed property have, in general, outrun their estates; but the reason here is obvious: though the Clanship is abolished, the dependents still remain, and every man who had neither inclination nor ability to do any thing, thought he had a right to be supported by his superior. This was carried so far, that many of them have been obliged to leave the country, and fix their residence at Edinburgh. Accustomed, however, to an ostentatious display of riches, and to a parade which was easily supported in the country, they have given too much into the same fashion, in a place where the expence attending it must be ruinous; and many of the first people have found it so. The young men of fashion here follow the example of their neighbours

in England ; though, I believe, the present fashionable mode with us, of raising money upon their own lives, has not as yet travelled so far. There is no trafficking with Jews here ; for, what is marvellous to tell, there never was a Jew seen in this country ; they and their annuities are yet in reversion.

But what will surprize a stranger the most on entering this country, will be the immense number of people he will find of the same name. An English gentleman who had travelled over the greatest part of Argyleshire in quest of a Mr. Campbell (which is here pronounced Camel) said, it was in vain to hunt after him any longer, for there were as many Camels here as on the desarts of Arabia. It is frequently no sign of your having found out the person you want, when you are acquainted with both his name and title : you must likewise know from whence he comes, or you know nothing. Now and then indeed a celebrated Beauty occurs, who may be found out without her designation. Should you speak of Miss J——n, for instance, every one will know who you mean, without saying she comes from H——n.

The

The Laird of a place is generally distinguished by the name of his Estate, and frequently by no other appellation. This derivation of names from the place of their abode is similar to that custom amongst the Germans, who are always named after their castles, their demesnes, manors, estates, &c. &c. and who, like Cadwallader, have a name as long as your arm, and a pedigree older than the flood.

This country has long been celebrated for its hospitality to strangers : and I am sure I can, with great truth, add my humble suffrage to this general observation. They do not think they have paid you all the attention that is necessary, when they have invited you once to dinner, and then take no more notice of you : they are eager to shew you repeated civilities ; they are happy to explain, to inform you of what is really curious in their country ; they give you a general invitation to their houses ; they beg of you to visit them familiarly, and are sorry if you do not do so. I am ashamed to say that many of my countrymen seem to have forgot all their kindness the mo-

ment they returned over the Tweed. I trust those waters will never wash away my remembrance, but that I shall always be proud to own the hospitality of the Scotch, and the civilities I received in Scotland.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

On the Good-breeding of the Scotch; their Language, particular Beauties in it, and Expressions.

To the Honourable William S——, Esq;

Edinburgh, December 6, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

I Know of no quality more conspicuous in the inhabitants of this country, than Complaisance; which is common to every age and sex, but more particularly to the women, who seem to make it a study to oblige, and endeavour to emulate each other in good-breeding: which, I think, is the art of shewing people, by external signs, the inward regard which we have for them. As nothing indicates the judgment of a nation more than good-breeding; so it likewise discovers their good nature: for politeness is, in my opinion, the result not only of

good nature, but good sense; it gives a lustre to every other charm, and conceals, in a great degree, every disadvantage which women may lie under in their persons. But I assure you, the Scotch ladies have no need of this enchanting accomplishment, on the last account. Nature has been as liberal to them in decorating their external parts, as in ornamenting their minds; and I believe as few nations excel them in beauty, as in advantages, derived from disposition and education. No women understand better the rules of decorum, nor are they rivalled by the French in the talent of agreeable conversation; for which they seem to be better calculated, as well from their superior knowledge of the world, as from their more extensive acquaintance with books and literature.

It is common with the Scotch to make use of the word *Friend*, even to strangers, after the manner of the French nation; which I have often thought conveyed an idea of benevolence and philanthropy most conciliating; and which prejudiced you in their favour at first interview. They frequently also address you in conversation
with

with the appellation of *my dear Sir*, the *mio caro Signore* of the Italians: which, you must needs acknowledge, is a never failing argument, and, at first onset, immediately disarms an antagonist, notwithstanding the rage and passion of disputation. It carries with it this peculiar advantage, that disputes, by this means, never arrive at such a pitch, as to occasion a downright quarrel, which is too often the case in many countries, and I am sorry to say, too general in ours; where, from a conceited education, and narrow intercourse with mankind, an impatience of contradiction, and a readiness to contradict, is too apt to usher in a disputation with downright abuse, or the appearance of open enmity. But when a man stops you short with *my good friend*, or *my dear Sir*, you cannot but be as calm as when you first began; because the words themselves imply a truce, and consequently whatever follows must be looked on as well intended, and with no hostile meaning; and delivered as the real sentiments of the Speaker, without that glee for disputation, which is so absurd and unpolite. There is also another great advantage derived from it: It not only prevents the violence of argument, but, by so doing, renders the faculties clear and undisturbed,

undisturbed, makes a man master of the reasoning he has already collected, and gives him time and opportunity to invent others, which may arise from the arguments or language of his opponent: and, in short, if you are vanquished, you cannot but admire the lenity of your enemy; and, on the contrary, cannot triumph over those, who submit with so much good grace and manners. If, then, you confess it is persuasive in the men, it is certainly invincible in the fair sex, who, with *my dear sir* added to their other artillery, are sure to obtain every thing they can wish. When you are told that, on the first introduction to a lady in this country, you are favoured with a salute, which immediately discovers the fragrance of her breath, the downy velvet of her skin, and pearly enamel of her teeth; that the first word which she utters to you is either *my good friend*, or *my dear sir*, which, softened by the sweetness of her voice, and affability of her manner, must receive an additional degree of warmth, and kindness; can you wonder that I am so enamoured with their company? or rather, do you not wonder that I can think of leaving them? But alas! alas! the time approaches for my departure:

ture: and if it was not for one dear object, who attracts me, like the faithful steel, to the magic circle of her arms, it would be with the utmost regret I should bid farewell to a country, which is the land of Pleasure, Rapture, and Delight. But suppose you should say, that these words, though very pleasing at first on account of their novelty, must soon lose their charm, when we come to be acquainted, that they are mere words of custom and ceremony, and uttered without any intention of good will or sincerity; and that expressions of kindness, when they are not known to be the marks and effects of kindness, are empty sounds; I must grant, that by degrees they become habitual, and do not operate so strongly by use, as on a stranger. But surely, at any time they are the highest signs of complaisance; and giving the appearance of truth to actions, and a strong desire to please and oblige, certainly produce a partiality for the speaker: not by the words, which in common speech signify scarce any thing; but because by these words he shews that he thinks you worth notice. Expressions of this nature are ingenious flattery: it makes those to whom it is paid, flatter themselves, whilst they look
look

look on it as a declaration of merit in themselves: and pray, what mortal man does not love to be flattered by a lady? For my own part, if it is a fault, I must plead guilty; and though I detest it as much as hypocrisy in the male part of our species, I am not proof against it when assisted by the fire of sparkling eyes, and delivered by female eloquence. A staunch philosopher would deride this credulity from the original perverseness of human nature; and in the same manner as Adam swallowed the forbidden fruit, though he knew it contained none of those excellent qualities ascribed to it by Eve; so we, his progeny, are tempted by the flattery of the fair sex, and are sure to give it credit, notwithstanding we are conscious of its untruth and insincerity.

The Scotch language has one beauty, in which it greatly excels the English, and in which also it conforms to the Italian; that of diminutives, which are created at pleasure, and expressed in one word, by the addition of a letter or syllable: thus, they say “manny, “doggy, catty,” for a little man, dog, or [cat; “wifey,” for a little wife; and
if

if it was necessary to speak of an inanimate thing, they do it also in the same manner; as “a buckley, knifey, “booky, housey,” for a little buckle, knife, book, and house. I need not tell you how emphatical this makes their tongue, and what an improvement it is on ours. But the pronunciation and accent is far from being agreeable: it gives an air of gravity, sedateness, and importance to their words; which, though of use sometimes in an harangue or public discourse, in common conversation seems dull, heavy, stupid, and unharmonious. On which account I scarcely ever heard a Scotchman tell a good story in all my life; for, notwithstanding he might put in all the circumstances to work it to a point, he would be sure to spoil it by his deficiency in manner, and remove the sting, which ought to tickle the imagination of the hearer, by appearing not to feel it himself. The inhabitants of this place, who are acquainted with the English, are sensible of this, and endeavour to speak like them, especially the politer sort of people, and the Professors of the College, who, in their lectures, strive to shake off the Scotch pronunciation as much as possible. Your perfect acquaintance

acquaintance with the literary productions of this country, make it unnecessary for me to make any observations on their style. I shall only say, that they appear to me, from their conversation, to write English as a foreign tongue; their mode of talking, phrase, and expression, but little resembling the language of their works; though I cannot but add, that even some of them, in their conversation, are fond of shewing their learning, by making use of words derived from antient languages. Amœnity is a favourite word of a celebrated Historian, who is truly the boast of his country; who, in private reputation, has as few equals, as in public, superiors: and whose works may be justly said to be *non ludrica cantilena ad momentum temporis, sed monumentum ad æternitatem.*

Believe me your ever affectionate friend,

and obliged, humble servant.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

On the Executions in Scotland.

To R. D. Esq.

Edinburgh, December 9, 1774

SIR,

I Was this morning a witness to one of the most solemn and mournful of all spectacles, the execution of a criminal. The sight of death is always affecting; but it becomes still more moving, when we behold a poor wretch sacrificed to the injured laws of his country, without one eye to compassionate his distress, or one friend who will own him, and expiring amidst a rude multitude, who probably insult him in his last moments.

When I was at Paris, it was my misfortune to be an involuntary witness of
the

the sufferings of a poor wretch, who was broke upon the wheel for the murder of his brother. It is almost impossible, in my opinion, to conceive a death more shocking; but the little concern the people seemed to feel upon the occasion, and their avidity to behold so terrible a sight, were still more astonishing. A poor woman, who had a very good place for seeing, at last fainted under the agitations which the sufferings of the poor criminal occasioned, and the people behind, instead of assisting her, were entirely taken up with the thoughts of getting her place, and seeing at their ease.

In the disposition which a criminal is supposed to be in at such a moment, when the fears of death are immediate, the instruments already before his eyes, and the many and terrible objects to engage his attention; at such a season, I cannot but think the ceremonies of religion ill-timed. When the poor creature was already tied down upon the cross, a *Religieux* was very busy in making him repeat little prayers for the repose of his soul; and when he had undergone the dreadful ceremony of having every limb broken, and
was

was taken from the cross to be tied on the wheel, when every joint was streaming with blood, and himself expiring in the last agonies of pain, the attention of the clergyman was engaged, not with the sufferings of the poor criminal, but in making him kiss a little piece of wood in the shape of a cross. During this ceremony, I did not observe one tear shed: they remarked, indeed, that the criminal was very well made, and that “*Monsieur le Bourreau etoit bien adroit.*”

In Scotland, and I mention it to its honour, there is, on these unhappy occasions, much more solemnity and decency observed. The lenity of the laws here makes it necessary that a man shall be “habit and repute” a thief, before he can be condemned to die for theft; and therefore executions, except for murder, are very uncommon. This man had already been twice convicted and pardoned; so that there was no room for intercession to the King’s mercy; nor was there the least hope of his amendment, as he was near sixty years old, had spent the whole of his life in a series of repeated thefts, and as he advanced in age, had advanced likewise in iniquity.

The

The town of Edinburgh, from the amazing height of its buildings, seems peculiarly formed to make a spectacle of this kind solemn and affecting. The houses, from the bottom up to the top, were lined with people, every window crowded with spectators to see the unfortunate man pass by. At one o'clock the City Guard went to the door of the Tolbooth, the common goal here, to receive and conduct their prisoner to the place of execution, which is always in the Grass Market, at a very great distance from the prison. All the remaining length of the High Street was filled with people, not only from the town itself, but the country, around, whom the novelty of the sight had brought together. On the Guard knocking at the door of the Tolbooth, the unhappy criminal made his appearance. He was dressed in a white waistcoat and breeches, usual on these occasions, bound with black ribbands, and a night cap tied with the same. His white hairs, which were spread over his face, made his appearance still more pitiable. Two clergymen walked on each side of him, and were discoursing with him on subjects of religion. The executioner,

executioner, who seemed ashamed of the meanness of his office, followed muffled up in a great coat, and the City Guards, with their arms ready, marched around him. The criminal, whose hands were tied behind him, and the rope about his neck, walked up the remaining part of the street. It is the custom in this country for the criminal to walk to the gallows, which has something much more decent in it than being thrown into a cart, as in England, and carried like a beast, to slaughter. The slow, pensive, melancholy step of a man in these circumstances, has something in it that seems to accord with affliction, and affects the mind forcibly with its distress. It is the pace which a man in sorrow naturally falls into: "Omnis
" enim motus animi," says Cicero, " suum
" quendam a natura habet vultum, et so-
" num, et gestum; totumque corpus ho-
" minis, et ejus omnis vultus, omnesque
" voces, ut nervi in fidibus, ita sonant,
" ut a motu animi sint pulsæ."

When the criminal had descended three parts of the hill which leads to the Grass Market, he beheld the crowd waiting for
his

his coming, and the instrument of execution at the end of it. He made a short stop here, naturally shocked at such a sight, and the people seemed to sympathize with his affliction. When he reached the end, he recalled his resolution; and, after passing some time in prayer with the clergyman, and once addressing himself to the people, he was turned off, and expired.

I own I cannot bear that unmoved temper in death, which has distinguished some people. The fear of dying, is in my opinion, a principle of our nature, implanted in us for the preservation of our existence, and which ought to be relinquished only with life. If ever we overcome this principle, it is when the mind is absorbed in grief, or insensible to its own condition. The Duke de la Rochefoucault says, “ That they who are
“ executed affect sometimes a constancy
“ and contempt of death, which is in
“ fact nothing more than a fear to
“ look upon it; so that this constancy
“ may be said to be to the mind
“ what a bandage is to the eyes.”

The

The voice of reasoning, if such is its voice ; can never be regarded in these last and painful moments ; nor have I any opinion of that miserable philosophy, which would render us indifferent, when we behold the affliction of our friends, when we are separated from every thing we esteem in life, and when we are about to experience that “ something after death,” of whose nature we are all uncertain.

So great is the abhorrence of the office of executioner in this country, that the poor wretch is obliged to be kept three or four days in prison, till the hatred of the mob has subsided, and his act is forgotten. Mr. Boswell, who congratulates Corsica on this proof of innocence, may pay his own countrymen the same compliment. If, however, there was any reasoning against popular prejudices, they must acknowledge, that an office, which is so necessary, must be imposed on some one ; and therefore, to insult the poor animal, whose calamities oblige him to a duty so requisite for the safety of society, is highly unbecoming that spirit

rit of humanity, and that gentleness of manners which every polished people ought to cultivate.

If they consider this as a point of honour, it is a false one. Soldiers, who are more governed by that principle than any other set of men, act very differently: they hold it no dishonour, when they are commanded to inflict in person the punishment of death on a fellow-foldier for cowardice, mutiny, or desertion; nor do they think it any disgrace to others, who are ordered to the same duty.

I beg pardon for detaining you so long on so melancholy a subject, when the present rage of being lively excludes all objects of grief, and I much fear even of feeling. I own there is a pleasure, to my apprehension, even in sorrow, and in making the distresses of others our own. I hate to be reduced to the necessity of wondering why I have wept; and I never feel more real indignation, than after the representation of an affecting tragedy, when the heart becomes interested with its descriptions,

scriptions, and every finer feeling is excited, in comes a man dancing with a straw upon his nose, or balancing a glass bottle.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER IX.

*The Suppers of the Scotch, and their Manner
of conducting them.*

To R. D. Esq;

Edinburgh, December 12, 1774.

S I R,

A MAN who visits this country, after having been in France, will find, in a thousand instances, the resemblance which there is betwixt these two nations. That air of mirth and vivacity, that quick and penetrating look, that spirit of gaiety which distinguishes the French, is equally visible in the Scotch. It is the character of the nation; and it is a very happy one, as it makes them disregard even their poverty. Where there is any material difference, I believe it may be attributed to the difference of their religion; for that same Catholic religion, to say the truth

truth of it, is a most comfortable one. The article of absolution is certainly a blessed invention, and renders the spirits free and unclouded, by placing all the burthen of our sins upon another man's back. A poor Englishman goes fretting and groaning, and carrying his miserable face into all companies, as contagious as an epidemical disorder, without one soul to take compassion on him, or pity his weakness : and should he not have a wife or family at home who cannot avoid him, he finds no person who will bear his infirmities, or look as sad as he does ; but is constrained to wander about, an unsocial being, till the month of November, and the *maladie Angloise*, relieve him from his distresses.

But though the Scotch have no absolution, they have something very like it—a superstitious reliance on the efficacy of going constantly to church. Many of them may be said to pass half their lives there ; for they go almost without ceasing, and look as sorrowful at the time as if they were going, not only to bury their sins, but themselves. At other hours, they are as chearful and gay as possible : and, probably, from hence arises that ease, that

spirit in their conversation, which charms in every company, and which is the life of every society. They see no harm in innocent familiarity. They think a frank and unrestrained behaviour the best sign of a good heart; and agree with Lord Shaftesbury, "that gravity is the very
"essence of imposture."

Whenever the Scotch of both sexes meet, they do not appear as if they had never seen each other before, or wished never to see each other again: they do not sit in sullen silence, looking on the ground, biting their nails, and at a loss what to do with themselves; and, if some one should be hardy enough to break silence, start, as if they were shot through the ear with a pistol: but they address each other at first sight, and with an *impressement* that is highly pleasing; they appear to be satisfied with one another, or at least, if they really are not so, they have the prudence to conceal their dislike. To see them in perfection, is to see them at their entertainments.

When dinners are given here, they are invitations of form. The entertainment of pleasure is their suppers, which resemble

ble the *petit soupers* of France. Of these they are very fond ; and it is a mark of their friendship to be admitted to be of the party. It is in these meetings that the pleasures of society and conversation reign, when the restraints of ceremony are banished, and you see people really as they are : and I must say, in honour of the Scotch, that I never met with a more agreeable people, with more pleasing or more insinuating manners, in my life. These little parties generally consist of about seven or eight persons, which prevents the conversation from being particular, and which it always must be in larger companies. During the supper, which continues some time, the Scotch ladies drink more wine than an English woman could well bear ; but the climate requires it, and probably in some measure it may enliven their natural vivacity.—

Without quoting foreign authorities, you will allow that a certain degree of wine adds great life to conversation. An Englishman, we know, is sometimes esteemed the best companion in the world after the second bottle ; and who, before that, would not have opened his lips for the universe. After supper is removed, and they are tired of conversing, they vary

the scene by singing, in which many of the Scotch excel. There is a plaintive simplicity in the generality of their songs, to which the words are extremely well adapted, and which, from the mouth of a pretty Scotch girl, is inconceivably attracting. You frequently feel the force of those very expressions, that at another time you would not understand, when they are sung by a young person whose inclinations and affections are frequently expressed in the terms made use of, and which the heart claims as its own. The eye, the whole countenance speak frequently as much as the voice; for I have sometimes found, that I had a very just idea of the tenor of a song, though I did not comprehend three words in the whole.

Formerly it was the custom for the bagpipe to play during their entertainments, and every family had their bard. In these songs were rehearsed the martial and heroic deeds of their ancestors, as incentives to their own courage; but in these piping times of peace, “our stern
“alarms are changed to merry meet-
“ings,” and tales of love and gentleness have succeeded to those of war. Instead
of

of the drowsy hum of a bagpipe, which would certainly have laid my noble courage asleep, the voice of some pretty girl claims your attention, which, in my opinion, is no bad change. I must confess, I have not much opinion of those feasts “of other times,” where your ears were continually stunned with the murders such a man had committed, and where he was to be continually told of what he had already done, that he might perform the same again. His modesty must certainly be put out of the question, otherwise he never could have sat to hear a detail of his own deeds. It is observed of a Welch hero, “that he was a devout man, a great warrior, and an excellent piper; and that he could play, with great skill, the songs of all his actions.”—This is still better.—With such authority, ought any man to be blamed for talking of himself, and being the hero of his own tale? While every one is railing at the present times, it is some consolation to find, that in many instances our forefathers were as absurd as we are; and that if we possess little, we have at least the negative merit of not boasting of what we have. I own I feel a pleasure in reconciling us to ourselves; for,

as some ingenious writers have proved that we are every way inferior to our ancestors, since we cannot rise to them, the only way left is to bring them down to us.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER X.

On the Civility of the common People.

To the Reverend Dr. ———.

Edinburgh, December 15, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

YOU will wonder to see a letter from me from this place, my last having been from London, without any thoughts of such a journey. You should have heard from me before this time, if I could as easily have found the knowledge of your residence, as the disposition of cultivating your correspondence; which I have always carried about me, since I have had the happiness of being acquainted with you personally.

You are pleased to say, my observations on the uncultivated manners and innate roughness of the common people, in many of the counties in England, entirely agreed with yours, when you made the tour of our country. It gave me much pleasure to hear you said so; and I shall hereafter have a higher opinion of my own judgment, from its coinciding with yours. I find the vulgar inhabitants of this country as varying in their dispositions from those of the southern parts of Great-Britain as the Æthiopians from the natives of Mexico, and as unlike, as if they were Antipodes. Though Scotland and England together are very minute in comparison with any of the countries on the European Continent, yet you cannot conceive a greater dissimilarity of manners; and so wide is the difference, that you would think the distance between them was from heaven to earth. I speak of the common people only; for the polished and polite are nearly the same in many respects.

Instead of that stubborn rudeness, and uncouth mind, that shyness and barbarism,

rism, which is even cultivated by our peasants, and which before I so much complained of, you find in the lowest hind in Scotland a compliant obsequiousness, and softness of temper, an ambition to oblige, and a sociability which charms you. They are naturally grave, hospitable, and friendly; and have such a peculiar attachment to their own country and families, that, were I to relate to you the wonderful accounts which I have listened to with astonishment, you could not but think that I was bordering on romance. But what distinguishes them from the vulgar inhabitants of almost any nation, is that peculiar desire to oblige and instruct; a philanthropy which they discover, on all occasions, to be of service and to do good, and which never can fail of rendering their intercourse and conversation most agreeable, and of the greatest utility to the traveller. In a wild and uncultivated country, in a miserable hovel, destitute of every convenience of life, exposed to all the inclemencies of climate, without common necessities to drag on a wretched, uncomfortable being, it is here you meet with souls generous, contented, and happy, ever ready to the call of humanity, religious, and charitable.

ble. In a short tour that I lately made to the Highlands, an opportunity presented itself of making my observations on the minds of the people; since I mixed with them, conversed on variety of subjects, lived in their families, and passed with them many a happy hour. As I frequently wandered over the mountains with my gun, I often found a sequestered village, which had little communication with the rest of mankind, that had received scarce any form or fashion from art and human invention; and consequently, not far remote from its original simplicity. One day a storm drove me to seek shelter in a small cottage, which I by chance espied in a deep valley at the foot of one of their mountains; and on entering, I saw a venerable old woman, with another about thirty, and five or six pretty infants, which, by their resemblance, I easily discovered to be her children; all employed in some domestic concern, and waiting the return of the master of the family, who, I afterwards found, was gone to provide fish and other necessaries, from a small town on the banks of the neighbouring lake. When they perceived me at the door, the mother of the little ones came immediately to meet me, and, with

with a countenance full of benevolence and hospitality, saluted me in the Earse language; which, though I did not understand it, seemed to welcome me to whatever they could afford, or I could expect to find there. She then reached me a stool, which was made of rushes, seeing I did not comprehend her tongue, and was pointing to me to sit down by the fire, when I addressed myself to the old lady in the corner, and demanded whether she could speak English; but they all shook their heads, and were silent. I then unloaded my game bag, which contained a white hare, and some ptarmigan, and began to court their good opinion, by presenting them to the children, and endeavouring to divert them, by shewing them my shooting implements, and other things which I had in my pocket, and which seemed to give them much delight; the woman, in the mean time, making signs to me to pull off my wet cloaths, and holding out a plaid which they had warmed by the fire. On my seeming to refuse their kind offices, they shook themselves, and looked sorrowful; which meant, as I since learnt, if I did not change my dress, I should catch

catch

catch an ague; a disorder to which they were extremely subject.

As the weather continued to threaten, and night was not far off, I sat myself down by the hearth, and amused myself by pulling off the feathers of one of the birds, which I made them comprehend would be very acceptable, as I had eat nothing almost the whole day; and just as I was preparing to broil it, the highlander opened the door, and, expressing his surprise at finding a stranger had taken possession of his household goods, in a free and good natured tone of voice, in the Scotch language, begged of me to proceed in my employ; and enquired the reason of this visit; adding, with a smile, 'that I must have entertained his wife and mother extremely well during his absence, to become so familiar with them; especially as they did not understand me, and had never in their lives beheld the face of any human person, except a few of their own Clan, who inhabited the other side of the hill.' When I had told him my story, and entreated pardon for the freedom I had taken, he embraced me with the highest degree of rapture, and, ordering the others to do the same, told

told me, ‘ the gentleman with whom I had
‘ been, and to whose house I wished to
‘ return the next day, was the head of his
‘ Clan; that he respected him, and would
‘ die for him; and, since I was a visitor
‘ to the Laird, I claimed from him every
‘ kind of hospitality and convenience,
‘ which his poor pittance could supply :
‘ though,’ he added, ‘ as a stranger who
‘ had lost my way, I had a right to ci-
‘ vility and assistance from every man.’

When I had finished my ptarmigan, of
which they would none of them partake,
he produced on the table some dried fish,
cheese, and oat-cake, of which they all
eat with an appetite that discovered their
poverty, and that brought to my remem-
brance the saying of the philosopher, that
“ he that eats with an empty stomach, needs
“ no variety of food; he that drinks only
“ for thirst, desires least change of liquor;
“ and he that wants least, comes nearest
“ to the Gods.” On our being satisfied, he
gave some to the infants, and said a grace
in the presbyterian form, praising God
with more fervent devotion than ever I
met with in an English bishop at the ad-
ministration of the sacrament.

The

The rest of the night we spent in conversation, whilst they plied me heartily with whisky; and I answered a number of questions which were demanded of me by the women through him as an interpreter; till at length, overpowered by fatigue, I reposed myself in a plaid by the fire; and enjoyed as sound a slumber as if my head had been pillowed on down.

“Under a canopy of costly state.”

The morning arose, and I took farewell of my kind hostesses; who parted with me with many expressions of friendship; and, if I may judge from their countenance, wished that the stormy weather had continued, that I might have been detained longer. The highlander accompanied me across the mountains in my progress homeward, cheating the dreariness of the way by his entertaining discourse, concerning the antiquity of his family, and the ancestors of his Laird; whom he had followed in the rebellion, and under whose banners he had ventured his life and fortune.

We

We had now arrived within sight of the house of my friend, when he wished me health, and success through life, and that I might never go further out of my right way, than when I wandered to his habitation. I paid his kindness with all the coin I was then master of; and parted with a thousand thanks and gratitude for his civilities.

I have detained you all this while with this length of story, in order to paint to you the true character of a Scotch peasant; and I dare say you will be astonished to find so many virtues in a family in the Highlands, where the inhabitants are thought by us to be in a state of barbarism. But such, I assure you, they all are,

*“Extrema per illos,
“Justitia excedens terris vestigia fecit.”*

Even in Edinburgh, the same spirit runs through the common people; who are infinitely more civil, humanized, and hospitable, than any I ever met with. Every one is ready to serve and assist a stranger;

ger; they shew the greatest respect to a person superior to them; and you never receive an impertinent answer. But after all this, I wish I could say they were more happy: notwithstanding these many excellencies, I find lying, treachery, dissimulation, envy, detraction, and vice, have their respective significations. As to their country, it is beautiful, and grand to a miracle, and, though far from being temperate, is so healthy, that you hear of fewer disorders than amongst any other people; and I declare, in every part that I have been, I never saw either an exceeding deformed person, or an aged, toothless, paralytic highlander. They eat a great quantity of fish dried in the sun, and a cake made of oatmeal, baked hard and flat. Their constant liquor is whisky; which is also made from oats, has a quick taste, extremely heady, but comfortable to the stomach; unpalatable to strangers, though hot and nourishing to those that are used to it.

And now, my good friend, I must take my leave of you, wishing you may enjoy your new preferment many a day. I think you want nothing now to add to your dignity, but an infant boy, and to be
be

be called father ; which, take my word for it, is infinitely more grateful than a pair of lawn sleeves, or the popedom in the character of an old bachelor.

My best respects attend Mrs. ——— ;
and believe me

Your ever sincere friend,

and obliged, humble servant.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

On the Genius of the Natives; their Temper; Persons; Hospitality; Inquisitiveness about Strangers.—The impossibility of being concealed.—Assisted by the Society of Ladies.

To the Honourable Lord —.

Edinburgh, December 25, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE continued in this city ever since you last heard from me, and find it so agreeable, that I foresee it will be with difficulty I shall prevail on myself to leave it. The inhabitants have so much civility and hospitality, and the favours which I receive are so many, that it would argue a want of acknowledgment, and that I am unworthy of the good opinion they are so kind to entertain, did I wish to hasten my departure. Your arguments,

guments, I must confess, carry great weight with them; and I must trouble you to deliver my obligations to my friends, for lamenting my long absence. I am sure they would readily pardon my neglect, were they as sensible of the charms of Scotland: for I find here every thing I can wish; and must own, I never spent my time more to my satisfaction. The gentlemen of this nation (pardon my impartiality) are infinitely better calculated for an agreeable society than Englishmen; as they have the spirit of the French without their grimace, with much more learning, and more modesty, mixed with that philosophical reserve, so distinguishable in our countrymen. They are extremely fond of jovial company; and if they did not too often sacrifice to Bacchus the joys of a vacant hour, they would be the most entertaining people in Europe: but the goodness of their wine, and the severity of their climate, are indeed some excuse for them. In other pleasures they are rather temperate, careful, and parsimonious, though avarice is seldom known amongst them; nor is any vice carried to a great excess. Their pride, which is not little, makes them too much prejudiced in favour of their country, and one another.

They

They are neither deficient in judgment, or memory; they possess design and craft, though no deep penetration; and are honest, and courageous. As to temper; active, and enthusiastic in business, persevering, and liberal, affable, and familiar; and, notwithstanding a roughness in their outward deportment, they are peculiarly possessed of the art of persuasion. They spend most of their time in reading, study, and thinking; and you find few of the common people very illiterate, though the first of their *literati* are no great scholars. They have little invention; and are no poets. Wit and humour are not known; and it rarely happens that a Scotchman laughs at ridicule. The men in general, in their persons, are large and disproportioned, with unfavourable, long, and saturnine countenances, which, perhaps, are encouraged by their education, and their seldom exerting their risible muscles. But, I think, there never was a nation, whose faces shewed their character more strongly marked, or physiognomies, from whose lineaments you might so easily guess their internal conceptions. The women are more to be admired than the men, and when young, are very beautiful: but the bloom of young desire lasts
but

but for a day ; the flower is no sooner expanded, than it begins to wither, and often dies long before its season of coming to maturity. You rarely find a woman above twenty tolerably inviting : but all under that age have a certain proportion of *embonpoint* and voluptuousness, which makes them highly the objects of luxurious love. After a particular time they grow large and lusty, which gives their features and shape a coarse and masculine appearance. The beauty of the women of this country seems to bear the same proportion to the beauty of the women in ours, that Scotch literature does to that of South Britain. Here all the young women are handsome, but none that would be chosen by a Guido or a Titian : here none of the men are without some learning, but you rarely meet with a great and deep scholar. The disposition of the women is much inclined to sociability : they are free, affable, modest, and polite ; fond of admiration, and flattery, and pleasure : no enemies to the joys of Venus, whose divinity they worship, to whom they liberally sacrifice ; and, in spite of the coldness of their atmosphere and northern blasts, light up as consuming fires in the

the hearts of their admirers, as the dames of Italy.

But the virtue which is peculiarly characteristic of the Scotch nation, is Hospitality. In this they excel every country in Europe: both the men and the women equally share in it; and indeed vie with each other in shewing politeness and humanity to strangers. When once you are acquainted with a family, you are made part of it, and they are not pleased unless you think yourself so. But as all other good qualities are frequently imposed on by ignorant, ill-designing persons; so this shares the common destiny; and the Scotch often rue the hour that they bestowed civilities on objects, who are unworthy, and insensible of their kindness. I am afraid they frequently meet with the fate of Sir John Brute, and get no other recompence for eating their meat, and drinking their drink, than this answer, "*that their adversary wears a sword:*" it being too often the case that they have been deceived by persons pretending to their good offices, and assuming false characters. This has produced an inquisitiveness concerning the family and circumstances of those they entertain, which they carry
to

to an excess; and are not contented with a general knowledge of their connections and friends, but wish to be informed of every minute and trifling circumstance relating to them. At first this seems odd and ridiculous to a stranger; especially as it has the appearance of making a comparison with themselves; for they are sure to interlard their interrogatories with stories respecting their own genealogies, and antiquity, or nobility of their families; of which they are extremely fond, and often too sanguine in their commendations: this indeed seems to be a national defect. But we are all of us blind to our own failings: the continual commerce we have with our inclinations disguises them to us: our reason contracts a kind of familiarity with our faults, when at the same time it weighs, examines, and condemns those of our neighbours.

It is impossible at Edinburgh to be concealed or unknown: for though you enter into the city a mere traveller, and unacquainted, you cannot be there many hours before you are watched, and your name, and place of abode, found out by the Cadies. These are a society of men who constantly attend the Cross in the

High-street, and whose office it is to do any thing that any body can want, and discharge any kind of business. On this account it is necessary for them to make themselves acquainted with the residence and negociation of all the inhabitants; and they are of great utility, as without them it would be very difficult to find any body, on account of the great height of the houses, and the number of families in every building. This Society is under particular regulations, and it requires some interest to become a member of it. It is numerous, and contains persons for every use and employment, who faithfully execute all commands at a very reasonable price. Whether you stand in need of a *valet de place*, a pimp, a thief-catcher, or a bully, your best resource is to the fraternity of Cadies. In short, they are the tutelary guardians of the city; and it is entirely owing to them, that there are fewer robberies, and less house-breaking in Edinburgh, than any where else.—But I have filled my paper, and must take my leave of you; being well assured that I need give you no further reason for my remaining here, than a description of its inhabitants. In a country where a man can find every thing he can wish, from
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the enjoyments of society, why should he not be contented? For me, I am happy at present; and when I find myself otherwise, it will then be time enough to enquire

*Quæ tellus sit lenta gelu, quæ putris ab æstu,
Ventus in Italiam, quis bene vela ferat.*

Adieu.

Your's sincerely.

LETTER XII.

An Account of the Public and private Diversions of the Inhabitants of Edinburgh; and Manner of educating the young Ladies.

To Miss Elizabeth R——

Edinburgh, December 30, 1774.

AS a letter from my dear Miss R—— is always accompanied with the greatest pleasure, your last did not stand in need of the good news it contained, to render it more agreeable. I sincerely wish you much amusement during your residence in London; but, I must say, I envy the happiness of those gallants who are to enjoy the satisfaction of your company:

To sit and see thee all the while,
Softly speak, and sweetly smile.

For

For my own part I must content myself with the entertainments this country affords; which, let me tell you, are by no means contemptible, whatever opinion you may entertain of them. We have an elegant Play-house, and tolerable performers; assemblies, concerts, public gardens, and walks, card parties, and a hundred other diversions, which in some degree keep me from pining for your Festino, Bach's concert, or Almack's.

As the genius of any people is not more easily discovered in their serious moments, than when they give a loose to freedom and pleasure: so the Scotch nation is peculiarly characterised by the mode of their diversions. A sober sedate elegance pervades them all, blended with an ease and propriety which delights, and is sure to meet with approbation. A Scotchman does not relax himself for amusements as if to pass away the hour: he seems, even in the height of pleasure, busy and intent, and as he would do, were he about to gain some advantage. His diversions are not calculated to seduce the unwary, or recreate the idle, but to unbend the mind, without corrupting it. He seems as if in his

infancy he had been taught to make learning his diversion, and was now reversing it, and making his diversions his study. But besides the public entertainments of this City, which are derived from company, the inhabitants have more resources of pleasure within themselves, than in many other places. The young people paint, draw, are fond of music, or employ their hours in reading, and acquiring the accomplishments of the mind. Every boarding-school Miss has something of this kind to recommend her, and make her an agreeable companion : and, instead of a little smattering of French, which is the highest ambition to attain in Queen Square, you find them in Edinburgh entertaining in conversation, sentimental, and well informed. The mode of education of the young ladies, is here highly to be commended, and admirably calculated to make them good wives. Besides needle-work, and those trifling arts, which are the principal of their instruction in England, the precepts of morality, virtue and honour, are taught them from their earliest infancy, whilst they are instructed to consider themselves as beings born for society, for more than outside appearance, and transitory pleasure, and to attend

attend to the knowledge of what is useful, rather than the œconomy of a Tambour frame. The ladies also who undertake this arduous task of instruction, are persons much better qualified in general than in other countries. They likewise introduce them into the politest company, and give them a taste for elegant and proper amusements; that, when they leave school, they are not only mistresses of those accomplishments which are necessary to command a family, but have the deportment and behaviour of experienced women of fashion. No ladies in Scotland ever murder the precious moments in what is called “work,” which is neither entertainment or profit, merely because they must have the appearance of doing something, whilst they see every one employed around them. They let no minute escape without its respective office, which may be of utility to themselves or others; and, after a proper sacrifice to reading and literature, gain instruction from society and conversation. I have often thought it a principal defect in the education of the English ladies, that they are taught to pay so much attention to the practice of sewing work, and other needle operations, whilst they neglect learning

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ing of greater importance and pleasure. Since they have minds equally capable of instruction with the other sex, why should they not be enlightened with the same kind of knowledge? especially as they seem more suited to it, as well from their superior sensibility, as their greater leisure and domestic life. Why should the characteristic which distinguishes us from brutes, be so strongly cultivated in the male, and have so little attention paid to it in the female species? Wisdom and science are not perfections in us merely because we are men, but as reasonable creatures, who have the pre-eminence over the rest of the creation. It is indeed necessary for the ladies to know these things, in order to qualify them for domestic œconomy; but I have no idea of any woman, except her whose circumstances cannot afford the expence of paying a servant, making them her employ, or putting them in practice.

The married ladies of this City seldom entertain large sets of company, or have routs, as in London: They give the preference to private parties, and *conversations*, where they play at cards for small sums, and never run the risk of
being

being obliged to discharge a debt of honour at the expence of their virtue and innocence. They often frequent the theatre, and shew great taste and judgment in the choice of plays where Mr. Digges performs a principal character.

As to exercise, they seldom ride on horseback ; but find much pleasure in walking, to which the soil and country is peculiarly adapted, being dry, pleasant, and abounding in prospects, and romantic scenes. It is likewise customary for them to drive in their carriages to the sands at Leith and Musselburgh, and parade backwards and forwards, after the manner of Scarborough, and other public places of sea-bathing resort.

For vivacity and agility in dancing, none excel the Scotch ladies: their execution in reels and country dances is amazing ; and the variety of steps which they introduce, and the justness of their ear is beyond description. They are very fond also of minuets, but fall greatly short in the performance of them, as they are deficient in grace and elegance in their motions. Many of them play on the harpsicord and guittar, and some have music

in their voices : though they rather love to hear others perform than play themselves.

I do not think the Scotch ladies are great proficient in the languages. They rarely attempt any thing farther than the French : which, indeed, they speak with great propriety, fluency, and good accent ; but they make up for it by their accurate and just knowledge of their own. They talk very grammatically ; are peculiarly attentive to the conformity of their words to their ideas, and are great critics in the English tongue. They chiefly read history, and plaintive poetry : but elegies and pastorals are their favourites. Novels and romances they feel, and admire ; and those chiefly which are tender, sympathetic, soothing, or melancholy. Their hearts are soft and full of passion, and a well-told story makes a deep impression on them. Like virgin wax, a gentle heat mollifies their minds, which reflects the finest touches of art and sentiment.——Nor are the gentlemen in Edinburgh less rational in their diversions than the ladies. There is only one, in which I can censure their conduct : they rather pay too much respect to the divinity

nity of Bacchus, and offer too copious libations at the shrine of that jovial deity. Their wines, indeed, of all kinds, are excellent, and their climate not the most comfortable; so that some allowance ought to be made them in that respect. But as they are, they are by no means so intemperate as the Germans; and, perhaps, their appearing to me in the least intemperate, may be occasioned by my peculiar aversion to, and abstinence from all intoxicating liquors. I have neither taste to relish, nor head to bear them. I have no idea of a man extending the pleasure of drinking beyond thirst, or forcing in imagination, an appetite artificial and against nature.

The youths in this country are very manly in their exercises and amusements. Strength and agility seems to be most their attention. The insignificant pastimes of marbles, tops, &c. they are totally unacquainted with. The diversion which is peculiar to Scotland, and in which all ages find great pleasure, is golf. They play at it with a small leathern ball, like a fives ball, and a piece of wood, flat on one side, in the shape of a small

small bat, which is fastened at the end of a stick, of three or four feet long, at right angles to it. The art consists in striking the ball with this instrument, into a hole in the ground, in a smaller number of strokes than your adversary.

This game has the superiority of cricket and tennis, in being less violent and dangerous; but in point of dexterity and amusement, by no means to be compared with them. However, I am informed that some skill and nicety are necessary to strike the ball to the proposed distance and no further, and that in this there is a considerable difference in players. It requires no great exertion and strength, and all ranks and ages play at it. They instruct their children in it, as soon as they can run alone, and grey hairs boast their execution.

As to their other diversions, they dance, play at cards, love shooting, hunting, and the pleasures of the field; but are proficient in none of them. When they are young, indeed, they dance, in the manner of their country, extremely well

well ; but afterwards (to speak in the language of the turf) they train off, and are too robust and muscular to possess either grace or agility.

I am sorry to say the hazard table is in high fashion and estimation. There are clubs in Edinburgh who may vie with White's or Almack's. But the misfortune is, there is a deficiency of ready money, which obliges them to keep books, by which they transfer their debts to one another. This renders it both inconvenient and troublesome to strangers to engage them: for if you lose, their necessity compels them to demand immediate payment; and, on the contrary, if you chance to be successful, they refer you to twenty different people, before you can expect your money; and you have reason to bless your stars, if ever you obtain it.—I do not know any thing so disgusting or against the grain of politeness, as being obliged to dun a gentleman for a game-debt: but here it is absolutely necessary: if you do not, you play without the least chance of being a winner.

And

And now, my dear Miss R—— I must
take my leave of you, wishing you to
believe me

Your ever sincere friend,

and much obliged, humble servant.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

On the Theatre.

To R. D. Esq;

Edinburgh, January 2, 1775.

SIR,

EDINBURGH, which has been for a long time without trade or company, a mere mass without spirits, seems to be animated with new life. The classes in the College are fitting, the terms are begun, the scenes of diversion are opened, and all is business, pleasure, and confusion.

This metropolis is said to be very gay; and, if I may judge from the little specimen I have already had of it, reports say nothing but the truth. The concerts have received the assistance of a new singer from London, the assemblies are opened for the reception of those who choose

choose to dance, and the theatrical heroes have already opened their campaign. As yet, I believe, they have had but few spectators, as the genteel people here fix one day for beginning to partake of these amusements, and are so very polite, that they never go before that day on any account. In compliance with your desire, I take this leisure of acquainting you with the present state of the Theatre, and the performances there.

The present Theatre is situated at the end of the New Bridge in the New Town, and on the outside is a plain structure like most others of the same nature. It was built by the subscription of a certain number of gentlemen, who let it originally to a manager for four hundred pounds a year. Mr. Ross was the first person who took it, and his name was inserted in the patent, which made him manager as long as he chose. A few years ago, plays were not in that repute at Edinburgh they now are. The ministers, zealous for the good of their flock, preached against them, and the poor players were entirely routed: they have now, however, once more taken the field, and the clergy leave them to

to their ungodliness. During these contests, Mr. Ross found, that the benefits of the theatre did not answer to the expences of it, and retreated in good time. Our modern Aristophanes, who imagined he had wit enough to laugh the Scotch out of their money, took it of Mr. Ross at the same price that was originally paid for it. He brought on all his own comedies successively; but as most of the humour was local and particular, few people here understood it. Now and then, indeed, a very civil gentleman was so kind as to explain what he had been told in London, such a joke alluded to; but as jokes always lose their strength in travelling, nobody was the wiser for the explanation. But when, in the course of acting, Mr. Foote attempted to introduce the Minor upon the stage, the ministers, who had long lain dormant, now rose up in arms. The character of Mrs. Cole gave them offence. They imagined themselves pointed out; but were so kind as to throw the injury upon religion. They acted just upon the same principles as the Monks did with Boccacio, who having told many ridiculous stories of their gluttony, and their amours in his Decameron, they very wisely agreed, that he had said
many

many disrespectful things of religion in general. The Scotch Clergy, not contented with damning the play itself, very piously pronounced all those damned who went to see it. Parties, however, rose on this occasion; and many were so wicked as to insist on its being performed. Riots ensued: the unrighteous triumphed, and the poor play was performed.

Mr. Foote, however, found, that to gain half the Town was not sufficient; the whole of it was necessary for his business; and therefore, when he perceived that he could not bring them into good humour, it was his duty to retire. However, on leaving Edinburgh, he made the best of a bad bargain, and raised the rent to five hundred pounds a year, for which sum he let it to Mr. Digges, the present manager.

The proprietors now saw the mistake they had been guilty of, in leaving it in the power of Mr. Ross to let it out to other people, and thus, in some measure, to deprive them of their own property. If any advantageous increase of rent could have been made, they thought themselves the only persons who were entitled to it; but

but of this they had deprived themselves, and put the house on a worse footing than it was at the first; for if four hundred pounds had already been found to be too large a rent, five hundred must be still more distressing, and prevent the manager from bringing good actors to entertain the Town. However, under all these disadvantages, Mr. Digges took the Playhouse. Some little juvenile extravagancies, more than any natural turn for the Stage, induced Mr. Digges to quit the Military Profession, to which he was bred, and become an Actor. Driven from the first line he took the second: and as he could not gain admittance to the London Theatre, he became manager at Edinburgh.

When one recollects the former profession of Mr. Digges, the politeness of his manners, and his other accomplishments, one is sorry that his necessities should ever have driven him to the stage; but when one is witness to the attention he pays to his business, to his extreme excellence as an actor, and to the pleasure which he gives to his audience, at such moments, every man is selfish enough to be happy that those necessities made him a player.

As

As to himself he derives all those brilliant qualifications from nature, which form a great actor. He has a handsome and expressive countenance, a penetrating eye, and a good voice. Some people will tell you, that there is a severity in his look, ill-suited to comic parts; but those who have seen him in the part of Macheath, must discover that he can dress it in smiles when he pleases. His person is rather above the middle size, well formed, and, as far as his time of life will allow of, capable of assuming any appearance. If he has any fault, generally considered, it is that of not walking the stage so properly as might be expected. He throws too much of that carelessness and indifference into his manner, which, in some characters, approaches to the vulgar, and can never be adapted to tragedy in any. He, however, excels so much in both, that I scarce know to which to give the preference. In some future letter I shall take the liberty of sending you my opinion of his merits in his different parts; at present I find I shall scarce have room for the little account which I propose giving you of the Theatre.

The

The Theatre is of an oblong form, and designed after the manner of the foreign ones. I do not know its exact dimensions; but at three shillings (which is the price of admittance into the pit and boxes) it is capable of containing about one hundred and thirty pounds. The pit seems considered here as the *Parterre* in the French theatre, into which gentlemen go who are not sufficiently dressed for the boxes. On very crowded nights the ladies sometimes sit here, and then that part of it is divided by a partition, the ornaments are few, and in an unaffected plain style, which, on the whole, has a very elegant appearance. It is lighted with wax, and the scenery is well painted; though they do not excel in those *jeux de theatre* which please and astonish the common people in London. The whole of their machinery is luckily very bad; and, therefore, much to the credit of their understandings, they have seldom any Harlequin entertainments: I have only seen one or two since I came here: but the *deceptio visus*, if such it could be called, was so miserable, that the poor players themselves seemed ashamed of it.

The

The upper galleries, or, as they obligingly term them in London "the Gods," seem here very compassionate Divinities. You sometimes hear the murmurings of displeasure at a distance; but they never rain down oranges, apples, &c. on the heads of the unfortunate actors. They suffer them very quietly "to strut their hour upon the stage," and if then they dislike them, "they are literally heard no more."

It is probable, that from an attention to these small and seemingly trivial circumstances, that you discover more of the real manners of a people, than from the greater and more public events in life, where the passions are naturally excited, and men act under a disguise. A boisterous fellow in England, who thinks it a part of his privilege to do what he thinks proper, provided neither the laws nor *magna charta* forbid it, when he takes a dislike to an actor, drives all the players off the stage, puts an end to the performance, and insults the whole audience. A Frenchman, and a Scotchman, whom an arbitrary government in one instance, and the remains of it in the other, has softened

softened and refined, keep their quarrels to themselves, consider the poor players as incapable of resistance, and shew their dislike to them only by not applauding them.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

Mr. Digges's Merit in Comedy.

To R. D. Esq;

Edinburgh, January 7, 1775.

SIR,

THE best Actors who have yet appeared, though long confined within the narrow limits of a strolling company, whenever they have discovered any uncommon degree of excellence, have always been brought on the London theatre; where the rewards of merit are so great, that if an actor has either avarice or ambition, he is sure some day to become eminent. Mutual excellence produces reciprocal emulation; and by a collision with other and better performers, the little asperities of provincial dialect and provincial action, are gradually worn away.

From

From a course of proper imitation, he at length becomes the object of imitation to others, and fixes the standard from which he cannot recede. A London audience are always too observant to permit an actor to fall into that indolence which a consciousness of acknowledged superiority too often produces.

Mr. Digges enjoyed none of these advantages : being denied access to the London theatre, he had no opportunity of forming himself upon what are thought to be the best models, or even of imitating what was acknowledged to be the example of good acting. His merits, therefore, like his genius, are all his own.—“ *Juvat integros accedere fontes;*” and, as far as I can judge, he copies in no instance from any performer I have seen. Wherever he gives a different interpretation to any passage, wherever new tones of voice are indulged, new action introduced; in short, whenever he varies from the common line, these beauties, if they are such, are all the result of his own judgment; and if he fails, he has at least the negative merit of failing singly, and does not blindly follow a multitude to do wrong.

He is now at the head of a company who seem intended as foils to himself; and though they change every year, I am informed they never change for the better. The smallness of the salaries accounts for this; there is only one or two whose pay exceeds a guinea a week; which, in a metropolis like Edinburgh, where the necessaries of life are almost as dear as in London, is scarce a subsistence; nor can the receipts of the house afford more, while the rent is so high. Mr. Digges is therefore constrained to do that from necessity, which, I am told, Mr. Garrick does from choice. Whenever the latter acts, he appoints the worst in his company, in order to appear to greater advantage himself: If this is true, it is a pitiful stratagem, and totally unworthy of the great abilities of Mr. Garrick.

As the Edinburgh company are very small as well as very bad, Mr. Digges is obliged to perform all the principal parts, and to act every night of representation, which is four times each week. From hence you may well imagine, that as he is constrained to personate such a number of
of

of different characters, it is impossible he should excel in all. Without commenting, therefore, upon those he probably may be deficient in, and in which he would not appear but from necessity, I will acquaint you with his principal parts.

Captain Macheath in *The Beggar's Opera*; Sir John Restless in *All in the Wrong*; Sir John Brute in *The Provoked Wife*; the Guardian in the Farce of that name; Pierre in *Venice preserved*; Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry the Eighth*; and Cato; form the list of his most distinguished characters: and in these, I think, he is excelled by no actor I have yet seen on any stage. The general run of actors, who have performed the part of Macheath, seem to imagine that a good voice was the only thing requisite, and that the audience must certainly be won by power of singing. From this cause, though many of them have sung it finely, none as yet have acted it properly. Mr. Digges, who, to a good taste in music, joins a manly and clear voice, performs the ballads sufficiently well without being drawn away by the tricks of sounds from the meaning and expression of the character. He still preserves the gay

thoughtless Libertine in every scene, dished with that proper degree of low humour which may be supposed a part in the character of an Highwayman: his action is most happily adapted to the part, and enforces every thing he says; particularly in that song,

“ The first time at the looking glass

“ The mother sets her daughter:” &c.

In singing this little air he is every thing the most critical judgment can wish for, and much more than one could possibly imagine the part would allow.

In the part of Sir John Restless, Mr. Digges discovers very capital merit. Tho’ Mr. King of Drury lane theatre has long been supposed the first in this part, I am now convinced that it has been granted to him without his deserving it: he degrades the character. The situations into which the jealousy of Sir John betrays him, are certainly ludicrous, but the passion itself is serious: though the causes are “ trifles light as air” to others, they are not so to himself: he blunders on from mistake to mistake; one moment seeing the folly of his suspicion, and the
next

next erring again; hurried on by a confusion of circumstances, which are never clearly unravelled till the last act: but all this is not the result of folly or buffoonery, but of feeling. Mr. Digges makes the proper distinction: he never anticipates the mirth his mistakes occasion: he never laughs before his audience; but is sensible that the real ridicule arises not from making the part absurd, but from being in earnest. The dark, gloomy suspicion of tragedy, as in Othello, leads to blood and murder; the jealousy of comedy to mirthful incidents—but they are still supposed to feel the passion.

“Interdum et vocem comœdia tollit,
“Iratufque Chremes tumido delitigat ore.”

Mr. Digges's figure, his manners, his whole appearance as well as action, conspire to render him infinitely superior to any actor I have seen in this character.

Sir John Brute is esteemed Mr. Digges's *chef-d'œuvre* in comedy; and in my opinion, he excels every actor in this part, not excepting Mr. Garrick; for I by no means subscribe to that opinion which al-

lows our modern Roscius unequalled in every thing he undertakes: no one can deny that in general he is the best performer that ever appeared; but in some characters he certainly has been excelled. There is a conviviality, a joyousness of temper in Mr. Digges, and which is peculiarly adapted to this part, which Mr. Garrick neither has in his natural disposition, nor can he imitate it. Mr. Garrick makes poor Sir John an old superannuated Brute, and, as one would suppose, totally incapable of uttering one word of common sense: when, on the contrary, he says not only a number of sensible things, but replete with humour and good observation.

In one part, however, he excells Mr. Digges,——in that where he gradually and insensibly drops asleep, the half-uttered imprecations dying away in his mouth. But Mr. Digges resumes his superiority in every other scene. At table with Lord Rake and Colonel Bully, you forget that it is an entertainment on the stage; it becomes real; and you fancy yourself not a spectator, but a guest. No man understands the ‘*leges bibendi*’ better

better than Mr. Digges; and he shews them here to advantage.

When dressed in Lady Brute's cloaths he again excels Mr. Garrick: his figure, which is larger, is much more grotesque and ridiculous. When he turns himself round to the audience, after having equipped himself properly, there is not an unmoved countenance in the house: when he proposes to sweat the taylor before they make him immortal; when he is carried before the Justice; his impudent look, his dirty bedlamite appearance during the examination; and when he puts his fan before his face, and desires the Justice "to spare his blushes," the whole audience are in one continued burst of applause; which is the best and truest test of his merit. I have already seen him perform this character four separate times, and I should see him act it a fifth with equal pleasure.

I will conclude this long letter with mentioning Mr. Digges's last part in comedy, the Guardian. This *petite* piece was written by Mr. Garrick, as a ridicule on that self-sufficient race of Coxcombs,

combs, who fancy themselves irresistible, and that every woman must be in love with them. A *petit maître*, just imported from France, pays his addressees (if such they can be called) to a young Girl of fortune lately returned from a boarding-school to her Guardian—a man of sense, merit, and accomplishments; and whose age is drawn at forty. Inspired with a just regard for such merits, she conceives an affection for her Guardian in secret; which diffidence forbids her being the first to disclose. The mistake is carried on for a long time; as nothing can convince the young lover, but that the lady admires him as much as he admires himself; and he says, ‘her eyes tell him so.’ But he finds himself mistaken: an *eclaircissement* is at last made; and the poor Macaroni is left in the lurch. The whole tenor of it is the triumph of sense over folly.

Mr. Digges has on this occasion only to appear in his own character, and to give utterance to his own sentiments. Grave, manly, handsome, accomplished; he is in every point the character itself. The female eye is no longer pleased with foppery and affectation, but acknowledges
the

the justice of the preference she has given; and that modern disgrace to manhood, that puny, motley animal, a Macaroni, sinks into his original nothingness: for, as Horatio says,

“ A skipping, dancing, prating tribe ye are,
 “ Fit only for yourselves; ye herd together!
 “ And when the circling glass warms your vain
 hearts,
 “ Ye talk of women whom ye never saw,
 “ And fancy raptures which you never felt.”

In a future letter I will send you my opinion of Mr. Digges's merit in Tragedy; at present I have scarce paper sufficient to assure you how much

I am, &c.

LETTER XV.

Mr. Digges's Merit in Tragedy.

To R. D. Esq;

Edinburgh, January 12, 1775.

S I R,

CERTAIN people here, who do not admire Mr. Digges so much as I do, will tell you, that there is a severity in his look which is highly unpleasing, and a roughness in his voice incapable of being modulated into softer and milder tones. They all, however, agree, that these circumstances seem to form him by nature for personating the part of Pierre. That gloomy resentment, that fullen ferocity, that fixed purpose of vengeance, which distinguishes his character to the last moment, can only be marked

marked by a stern countenance, and expressed by a firm tone of voice. There is something so repugnant to the spirit of forgiveness, and so shocking even to human nature, throughout the whole of his conduct, that it requires uncommon merit in a performer to make it admired. As yet no actor ever excelled in it; so that Mr. Digges, in this part, stands unrivalled.

He is peculiarly happy in that scene where, after dwelling upon every circumstance to try the disposition of his friend Jaffier, he at last trusts him with the fatal business of the conspiracy. His look, his tone of voice, his action, are all expressive of that cautious timidity, with which a long habitude of suspicion, and a wicked knowledge of the world inspire a man who confides a secret of the last importance to the bosom of another. He speaks this address to Jaffier admirably:

—
“ I'll trust thee with a secret : there are spirits
“ This hour at work—But as thou art a man
“ Whom I have pick'd and chosen from the world,
“ Swear that thou wilt be true to what I utter :
“ And when I've told thee that which only Gods,
“ And men like Gods are privy to, then swear
“ No chance or change shall wrest it from thy bosom.”

When

When he is brought before the Senate, as yet uncertain of what he is accused, though Mr. Digges's whole action shews that presence and intrepidity of mind which the character demands ; you still discover he is counterfeiting a virtue which he has not. When at last Jaffier is produced, and he can no longer suppose them ignorant of his crime, that look of defiance which Mr. Digges then assumes, when he rejects the offered pardon and chooses death, when he denounces curses on the whole Senate, and wishes that "divisions" may still vex their councils," breathes the very spirit of his character, and discovers that obstinate and unconquered resolution, his author meant to draw.

In the following scene with Jaffier, Mr. Digges is equally admirable. His whole action, not less than the speeches themselves, is contrasted to that of his friend. That fullen and disdainful dignity with which he first regards him, and those degrading reproaches with which he insults his weakness, in betraying the secret he had confided to him, are all properly marked in Mr. Digges's performance.

In

In the last scene, all Pierre's former character is forgotten; he is no longer the "*Iracundus, inexorabilis, acer.*"—His distresses draw a veil over his imperfections; and when he points to the scaffold already prepared for him, and asks Jaffier,

"Is't fit a soldier, who has liv'd with honour,

"Fought nation's quarrels, and been crown'd with
"conquest,

"Be expos'd a common carcase on a wheel?"

no breast can be insensible to his situation, or unmov'd at the mournful and pathetic accent with which Mr. Digges utters this sentence.

I will not detain you with all the minutiae of Mr. Digges's excellence in the part of Cardinal Wolsey. On the English stage, it is so seldom acted for want of proper representation, that one cannot from thence form any comparative idea of his merit. In this country, it is always said to be Mr. Digges's master-piece, and, probably, there is none in which (to use an expression of the Theatre) he better looks the character. His very attitude expresses the part. You see that fawning yet imperious

perious carriage, that affected humility, with that real haughtiness, blended at one and the same instant. No words can convey to you his merit in the scene where the King first discovers his treachery, and, giving him the letter he had found, bids him

“ Take that and then to breakfast with what appetite
“ he can.”

In one cast of his eye you anticipate his whole fate : you discover, without words, a great and proud man, dashed in one moment from power, wealth, and titles, to a bottomless abyss of poverty and derision. The mind wishes for nothing more. — You have scarce any occasion for that fine soliloquy, to which he does equal justice.

I mention the part of Cato last, because, though it is not generally thought so, it is, in my opinion, Mr. Digges's best performance. In general, his voice is not susceptible of that feeble expression which most actors assume in the part of an old man. He gives you, however, the full force of that softness which appears as if involuntarily, of that broken and interrupted

ed accent, where the infirmities of nature baffle our resolution, and force us to weep in spite of ourselves. This is the exact character of Cato, who struggles on every occasion, to suppress the natural affections, as if ashamed of them, in conformity to the doctrines of Stoicism. When he is told that his son Marcus did not, as he supposes, desert his post, but died in the defence of his country, covered with wounds; when he recovers from that momentary impression which the death of a son, even in such a cause, must give him, and in spite of parental affection breaks out into that noble thanksgiving, of

“ Thanks to the Gods, my boy has done his duty !”

Mr. Digges's look and action beggar all description : and I appeal to every one who has seen him in this part, whether Mr. Garrick, in the meridian of his acting, ever pronounced a line better. Again, when he meets the corse of his son, borne by his fellow-soldiers, his action is equally fine. When he bids them set him down, that he may contemplate his wounds, while he bends over the dead body, and struggles to suppress those tears which he imagines would disgrace him ; while he pronounces

pronounces that beautiful eulogium which the love of his country inspires, and which is a soldier's best reward, nothing can be performed in a more masterly manner.

I have now given you the outlines of Mr. Digges's theatrical merit. I am sensible there are many other parts equally worthy observation, which I may have omitted; but you will remember, that I am sending you what struck me on representation only, and which I mark down from memory. It is amongst the few instances of my life where my expectations have not been disappointed; for, though I had been led to hope a great deal, Mr. Digges more than repaid it: and when you reflect, that his merit has entirely been the result of his own judgment; that he has never had a competitor to excite his emulation, nor any other object of ambition but that of pleasing his audience, in which he has meritoriously persevered for a number of years, and sometimes without much encouragement; you will agree with me in thinking, that all I can say is but a poor tribute to his excellencies.

But

But lest you should begin to think, as many other good-natured people do, that writing panegyric is very stupid employment, I shall beg leave to conclude this letter.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

*The Entertainments of Oyster-Cellars and
Comely-Gardens.*

To R. D. Esq.

Edinburgh, January 15, 1775.

S I R,

YOU have so frequently run the round of all the fashionable diversions in other countries, as well as your own, and have so long imagined that gilded roofs and painted ceilings are the only scenes of festivity, that you will not easily believe there exist any other. There is, however, a species of entertainment, different indeed from yours, but which seems to give more real pleasure to the company who visit it, than either Ranelagh or the Pantheon. The votaries to this shrine of
pleasure

to grow very argumentative, and consequently very dull. Pipes and politics were introduced; but as I found we were not likely "*ex fumo dare lucem*," I took my hat, and wished them a good night. The bill for entertaining half a dozen very fashionable women, amounted only to two shillings a-piece. If you will not allow the entertainment an elegant one, you must at least confess that it is cheap.

And now, Sir, I beg that you will treat these Oyfter-cellars with respect, and consider them, for the future, as very genteel meetings. The Beauties of this place, who frequent them, ought to keep them sacred from your reproach; for they are mysteries of their own. Not many years ago, you will remember a certain nightly meeting in London, commonly distinguished by the name of Mother Midnight's, which was constantly crowded with the most fashionable people of both sexes: a meeting equally distinguished for its seasonable hours, and the utility of its entertainment: for what could be more improving, than making a turkey dance, merely by putting a small quantity of red hot iron under its feet? Or teaching a few refractory cats to squall a concert?

The

The design was indeed patriotic, and calculated to save England those immense sums which have since been bestowed on French dancers and Italian fingers; and which, in that case, would have been confined to the merits of our own countrymen.

The Oyster-cellars of Edinburgh, however, are exempt from one charge, with which those of London were accused, and not without reason: there are no intrigues carried on here. The privacy of the scene, and the numbers that frequent them, may indeed give cause for suspicion; but I believe it is a groundless one. No lady has as yet removed from them into the Commissary Court; a little apartment, where three or four “excellent young men,” (as Shylock says) sit in judgment over the infidelities of wives: and who, when they see any ladies very much tired of their husbands, are so kind as to oblige them with a separation.

You will find, that the Oyster-cellar is only a winter entertainment. In summer, another kind takes place. This is an humble and very distant imitation of Marybone Gardens, and is held in a place called

called Comely Gardens ; not that they have any relation to the name ; for there is not the least beauty about them. They are open twice a week, from the beginning of June till the latter end of August, and the admittance is only one shilling.

Having nothing to do one evening, at the end of last summer, I went there with an intention of seeing what was to be seen. I walked up and down the Gardens, but nobody appeared. I then approached the orchestra, which was the ruins of an old pigeon-house, with no other alteration but that of removing the pigeons, and making room for four or five musicians, who were playing a composition, most musical, most melancholy, out of one of the windows. They continued this for some time ; but finding there was no one to listen to them, and that “ they were “ wasting their sweetness on the desert “ air,” they gave over playing, and retired for the evening.

I now find, that these Gardens are considered by the fashionable people here, as a very unfashionable place, and only frequented by the *Bourgeois*. It is possible, that even this place, under the direction

of a man of taste, with proper improvements, might, in some measure, resemble the public gardens in London. But the rage of diversions is here so much more moderated, and they have in general so little ready money to throw away upon articles of amusement, especially as the better sort of people are in the country at this season of the year, that I am persuaded they will never have any imitation of Vauxhall at Edinburgh. The climate would be no obstruction during the summer season, as they walk out at all hours in the evening without the least inconvenience. But the greatest objection is, that it has been thought unfashionable; and when that is the case, it is effectually condemned for ever. No place under the sun is more absolutely under the dominion of the word Fashion. If a few select people here choose to say, that such a thing is *vulgar*, there is no further questions; but it becomes so immediately.

This idea is so strong in this country, that I am persuaded, had a certain very ingenious Lord * here, who took it into his head to inform mankind they were originally

* Lord M——b——do.

originally born with tails, got but six other men equally as daring and ingenious to support his opinion, that, in a very short time, every man in this country would have felt for his tail on coming into a room.

I have the honour to be, &c.

Dr. Johnson's account of his tour into Scotland has just made its appearance here; and has put the country into a flame. Every body finds some reason to be affronted. A thousand people who know not a single creature in their Western isles, interest themselves in their cause, and are offended at the accounts that are given of them. But for this unfortunate writer, say what he will, it must be confessed they return it with interest: Newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, all teem with abuse of the Doctor: while some very ingenious criticisms show

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LETTER

LETTER XVII.

*On the Reception of Dr. Johnson's Tour at
Edinburgh.*

To R. D. Esq;

Edinburgh, January 24, 1775.

S I R,

DR. Johnson's account of his tour into Scotland has just made its appearance here; and has put the country into a flame. Every body finds some reason to be affronted. A thousand people, who know not a single creature in the Western isles, interest themselves in their cause, and are offended at the accounts that are given of them. But let this unfortunate writer say what he will, it must be confessed they return it with interest: Newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, all teem with abuse of the Doctor: while one day some very ingenious criticisms shew

shew how he might have wrote such a thing better ; the next, others equally ingenious prove, that he had better never have wrote such a thing at all. In this general uproar, amidst this strife of tongues, it is impossible that a dispassionate man should be heard ; so I sit down a quiet spectator of what passes, and enjoy the storm in tranquillity.

Though I cannot say I am a friend to this method of revenge, or to seeing these great men descend to abuse one another, like mere common mortals, I must confess, at the same time, that Dr. Johnson has deserved the treatment he meets with. He was received with the most flattering marks of civility by every one ; and his name had opened to him an acquaintance, which his most sanguine wishes could scarce have hoped for ; but which his manners would certainly never have obtained. He was indeed looked upon as a kind of miracle in this country ; and almost carried about for a shew. Every one desired to have a peep at this Phenomenon ; and those who were so happy as to be in his company, were silent the moment he spoke, lest they should interrupt him, and lose any of the good things

H 3

things he was going to say. It was expected that he should speak by inspiration. But the Doctor, who never said any thing that did not convey some gross reflection upon themselves, soon made them sick of jokes which were at their own expence. Indeed, from all the accounts I have been able to learn, he repaid all their attention to him with ill-breeding; and when in the company of the ablest men in this country, and who are certainly his superiors in point of abilities, his whole design was to shew them how contemptibly he thought of them. But those, who make Gods, and then fall down and worship them, should not be disappointed at the stupidity of their own idols. The Scotch, who looked up to Dr. Johnson as something supernatural, should not have been surpris'd at finding him quite the reverse. Admiration and acquaintance, you know, are generally said to be incompatible: with him, they must always be so: he has neither the ambition to desire, nor the manners to engage, attention. Had the Scotch been more acquainted with Dr. Johnson's private character, they would have expected nothing better. A man of illiberal manners and surly disposition, who all his life long had been at enmity with
the

the Scotch, takes a sudden resolution of travelling amongst them; not, according to his own account, “to find a people of liberal and refined education, but to see wild men and wild manners.” Confined to one place, and accustomed to one train of ideas; incapable of acquiescing in all the different tempers he might meet with; and mingling with different societies, he descends from his study, where he had spent his whole life, to see the world in the Highlands, and Western Isles of Scotland. Behold this extraordinary man on his journey, in quest of barbarism! and at length sitting down, wearied and discontented, because he has met with some degree of civility in the most desert parts; or, to speak more properly, because he has found nothing more barbarous than himself.

Poor Johnson, who, probably, had never travelled more than a few miles from London, before he came there, must naturally be astonished at every thing he saw, and would dwell upon every common occurrence as a wonder. One cannot, therefore, be surpris'd at his observing, ‘that the windows in some of the little hovels in Scotland, do not draw up, as his own

‘ do in London ; or that such a spot of
‘ ground does not produce grafs, but is
‘ very fertile in thistles.’ He found him-
self in a new world : his sensations were
those of a child just brought forth into
the day-light ; whose organs are confused
with the numerous objects that surround
him ; and who discovers his surprise at
every thing he sees. Men of the world
would not have descended to such remarks.
A petty and frivolous detail of trifling cir-
cumstances are the certain signs of ignor-
ance or inexperience. The Scotch should
have treated them in this manner, and dis-
regarded them. For my own part, to say
the best of it, I look upon all his obser-
vations in regard to men and manners, to
be those of a man totally unacquainted
with mankind.

Most of his information, I know to
have been received from the meanest and
most ignorant of the people. During his
stay at St. Andrew’s, he resided in the
house of a Professor of that University, a
very ingenious man, and capable of giving
him all the information he could have
wished ; but he never enquired one word
about the matter : and yet, after this,
does Dr. Johnson sit down, and give you
a long,

a long, circumstantial account of St. Andrew's, with scarce three words of truth in the whole of it. But this might be forgiven. In regard, however, to facts, to conversation, and to affairs of literature, one might reasonably have expected from the Doctor more candour, and more veracity. But here again we are to be disappointed: he has his own maxims, and he never moves from them. He had taken a resolution not to believe Fingal to be the work of Ossian, but an imposition on the public by Mr. Macpherson: and, after various observations almost unintelligible from the language they are conveyed in, he is so kind as to say, "I asked a very learned Minister in the
" Isle of Sky, (who had used all arts to
" make me believe the genuineness of
" the book) whether at last, he believed
" it himself? But he would not answer:
" he wished me to be deceived for the
" honour of his countrymen; but would
" not directly and formally deceive me.—
" Yet has this man's testimony been pro-
" duced publicly as of one who held Fin-
" gal to be the work of Ossian." This is a plain, simple tale, that I own staggered me: I have only to regret for the Doctor's sake, that not one word of it

is true. "Of all the lies in the catalogue," as Touchstone says, "one ought to be most cautious of giving the lie direct:" in some cases it is unfortunately necessary. In a conversation with the Laird of Macleod, who was present at the time, and whose word, I am bold to say, I can depend upon, I asked him whether this was the truth or not? his reply was this, "Quite the contrary, I assure you: Doctor Johnson was very overbearing, and laughed at the Minister for giving credit to such an imposition. At last he asked him, whether he seriously did believe it? the gentleman's answer was, that he did."

Now what degree of attention ought one to pay to a man who can misrepresent facts so grossly, and interpret them to his own purposes? "A Scotchman," Dr. Johnson says, "must be a very sturdy moralist, who does not love Scotland better than truth:" But what country or what attachment is it that makes the Doctor himself regard truth so little?

On

On many other subjects his observations are equally ingenious, novel, and entertaining. In spite of the many able men this country has produced, and whose works are an honour to every part of science, the Doctor finds out the Scotch are no scholars, but that they possess a middle state betwixt profound learning and profound ignorance. Thus you see how we have hitherto been imposed upon.— Some people have thought that Dr. Robertson, Mr. Hume, and Dr. Beattie, were ingenious men : but quite the contrary ; they are only a few degrees above profound ignorance. Suppose one should ask, At what line of this literary barometer the Doctor places himself ? whether it is at profound knowledge, at perfection itself, or whether he is contented with only being a little above Mr. Hume, or even Dr. Beattie ? How much are the world obliged to Dr. Johnson, for rectifying the wrong opinion they entertained of the Scotch nation ! They have, however, one consolation in all this dearth of learning, that they have no pedantry ; that they never brandish their knowledge in your face, but keep it contentedly in their pockets ; that they express themselves in a natural, plain way,

way, and to the best of their abilities ; that they seek for no distinctions in words, nor pride themselves upon phrases ; that they are not fond of those pompous descriptions, which “ amaze the unlearned, “ and make the learned smile ;” but content themselves with that humble road which the mediocrity of their understandings point out to them ; happy in giving no offence but to the learned Dr. Johnson, who visits them for the benefit of their ignorance, and insults them with his superiority.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

On the Disorder of the Country; the Infrequency of it, &c.—The Sibbins; and Cleanliness of the Inhabitants of Edinburgh.

To the Honourable William S——, Esq;

Edinburgh, January 28, 1775.

DEAR SIR,

AS I know you will pardon my thinking you, like the multitude of my own countrymen, not a little prejudiced against the natives of this country; especially as you have given me sufficient reason, by the enquiries you made in your last letter; I take the liberty of filling this sheet with endeavouring to divest you of your ill opinion, by giving you a single example, with regard to which there seems to be a general mistake; namely,
the

the universality throughout this kingdom of that most troublesome of all disorders, called the Itch. On account of which notion, I make no doubt, but that you were much surpris'd to find such a custom prevailed here, as strangers constantly saluting them on introduction ; which was the subject of a former letter.

I assure you, on the credit of a man of honour, which I always wish to possess in your esteem, instances of it are so rare, at least in this part of the country, that I really think you stand less chance of catching it, than in most parts of England. It must be granted indeed, that in the Highlands the common people are extremely poor and necessitous, and perhaps uncleanly in a high degree ; but I really believe even there the Itch is not so frequent as we are apt to imagine. The quantity of oatmeal which they eat, will naturally produce an eruption on the skin, which, perhaps, much resembles that complaint, but is not of that disagreeable nature to be communicated by contact.

I remember,

I remember, about four years ago, I was alarmed with an appearance of this sort on my hands, owing to being accustomed to wash them in oatmeal and water. My ignorance, for a little while, inclined me to imagine it was the itch; but finding the symptoms on no other part of my body, and being well assured that I had had communication with nobody that could have infected me, I was led to think that it was occasioned by something which had been applied to my hands; and accordingly I left off making use of washing them in any thing, except soap occasionally, and have never since been troubled in the same manner.

I am perfectly sensible, had this disorder been infectious, that it would be impossible for many of the family where I then lived to have escaped; for I was so positive that it was not the itch, that I took no means of preventing it. That this is frequently the case in this country I am well assured, both from the quantity of oatmeal which the common people daily eat, and which makes a chief part of their subsistence; and from the
the

the pernicious effects which would be produced from their neglect, was it absolutely the itch.

It is well known to the physical world, that the true itch, which I believe proceeds rather from nastiness, than from foulness of blood, is of so malevolent a complexion, that, without any topical application to stop its progress, the *animacula* would increase in such an abundance, that they would consume a man in a few years: but in the Highlands they are so little afraid of this *morbus avenaceus*, that it is almost essential to the very being of a Highlander; and though they take no means of prevention, it never reaches such a pitch as to destroy them, or be of dangerous consequence.

But there is a disorder which is known in this country by the name of *The Sibbins*, which is of a nature most formidable and horrid; and resembles the Yaws, which is common among the Slaves in the West Indies. The poor unhappy beings who are thus tormented, are by degrees wasted away, and eaten up by pestilential sores, and are so exceedingly

ceedingly offensive, that they are deprived of every assistance from their fellow creatures.

Notwithstanding the great excellence of the Esculapian art, which flourishes in this City more than in any part of Europe, it still baffles the power of medicine, and is deemed incurable.

I once had a sight of a boy in this wretched situation; who presented a spectacle truly terrible and shocking. He was totally deprived of one side, which was mangled to a skeleton, whilst the other seemed just to have fallen a prey to the fury of its ravenous appetite: the distinction of features in his face was almost obliterated; his mouth and nose were one entire chasm; and his lifeless eye-ball hung staring in the socket, which seemed hollowed out, and too large to confine it: in short, he appeared a walking lazarus-house.

There is also another error, which in England we are very liable to fall into concerning the natives of this country; (equally ridiculous, and without truth, as the prevalence of the itch, and seems from thence to have taken its rise) which
is,

is, that they are extremely neglectful of Cleanliness, both in their persons and houses. With regard to the higher rank of persons, I think, in this respect, there is no judging by them, as they are nearly the same in all great and civilized places; which is the case also of the lowest dregs, who cannot but be otherwise in poverty, necessity, and wretchedness.

It is, therefore, from the middle class I should form my opinion; who, as the greatest part of any nation, bear the stamp and marks which are characteristic of it. And I cannot but say, that both as to themselves and families, they pay much greater attention to neatness than the French, whom, in their resemblance in this particular, they far excel.

In Edinburgh, from the unfavourable situation of the houses, it is amazing the inhabitants preserve any degree of decency; but you rarely find, in the worst part of the Town, an obscure lodging that has not some degree of neatness, and a certain simplicity about it,

it, to make it comfortable; though I know many people who say, that it is impossible to affirm this, as in general they are so dark, that you cannot vouch for any thing but their obscurity.

I am informed that Edinburgh is greatly improved in this respect within a few years, occasioned by the diligence and management of the Police; which set an example, by being particularly careful of the cleanness of the streets, into which, as a common sewer, all the nuisances of the houses are emptied at a stated time in the night, on the ringing of a bell, and immediately removed by persons appointed for that purpose; and at the same time the reservoirs being set open, which are placed at certain intervals in the streets, carry every thing away; so that in the morning the streets are so clean, that foot passengers walk in the middle of them.

It is likewise a severe penalty to throw any thing out of the windows. But I cannot help observing the intolerable stench that is produced at this season

season of the night, on the moving the tub of nastiness from each floor: such a concatenation of smells I never before was sensible of; it has been sometimes so powerful as to wake me, and prevent my sleeping till it was somewhat lessened.

As I know you pay great credit to Dr. Johnson, I will conclude with informing you that his observation on the windows in the City of Edinburgh, is as false as it is absurd: To be sure, in all large places, where there is a number of bad houses, there cannot be all those conveniences which pleasure or luxury has contrived; but for the Doctor to affirm, 'that there are no windows hung by pulleys in the Old City of Edinburgh,' is almost too gross a mistake to require a contradiction. I imagine he found the windows, as he describes them, in the lodgings of his intimate friend, and from thence concludes that they are in the same manner throughout the City.

I cannot but add, that many other parts of his book deserve the like attention. Beware, therefore, of the credit
you

you pay to the writings of an author,
who makes remarks

“ By way of filling,
“ To raise the volume price one shilling.”

And believe me to be

Your ever affectionate friend,

and obliged, humble servant.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

On the Cookery in Scotland; and some particular Disbhes.

To S. W——, Esq;

Edinburgh, February 3, 1775.

MY GOOD FRIEND,

I KNOW of no word that is made use of by the generality of mankind with so little meaning, as the word *Taste*. Every one talks of *Taste*, or *the Taste*, or *the good Taste*; but few affix any idea to the term; for they do not mean their own natural Taste, but that of some body, or some set of people, or some country, which is always uncertain, always varying, and imaginary; and, in short, of which they can give no account. But this *ignis fatuus*

fatuus is not oftner talked of than followed, without being understood, perhaps to the utter ruin and destruction of the poor misguided persons who have folly or vanity enough to pursue it. We find, every day, some that have lost their fortunes, because it was *the Taste* to play at hazard. Others, who have exhausted their hereditary estate, in *cameo's*, *intaglio's*, *antiquo's*, and *moderno's*, in pictures, statues, and medals, in order to acquire it. Some that have built houses which they could not live in, to conform to it; and others, who have pulled houses down, which had been the delight of their ancestors for many a generation, because they did not agree with *the modern Taste*. They listen with disgust to an Italian musician, whom they pretend to attend to with enthusiasm and rapture; and yawn in private over a sentimental comedy, which they hear with applause and admiration, because it is *the Taste*. But the greatest absurdity is, that *Taste*, in its proper signification, viz. the sensation of the palate, now-a-days, entirely gives place to this artificial one; and the privilege of tasting for one's self, which is a natural prerogative of nature, must be yielded up, if you wish to be admitted into the politest company. A
man

man must dine on a ragout or fricassée, because it is approved of by a set of good eaters, or the *savoir vivre*, though he is longing all the while to testify his real taste, by a frequent application to the side board and roast beef. Besides, the greatest misfortune attending it is, that this Taste is perpetually changing, and in a constant state of fluctuation; that you have no sooner acquired the proper relish, or perhaps got the better of your antipathy, than you are obliged to despise what you have been labouring at, to the great detriment and mortification of your constitution and stomach, and compelled to gratify your appetite according to a new *Taste*.

I was led into these reflections by a dinner from which I am just come, and from which I rose up almost famished with hunger, and tantalized to death by the enjoyment of other people; because my friend must needs entertain with dishes in the *highest Taste*; and, what was worse, entirely in the Scotch taste, whose cookery I cannot commend so much as their politeness and hospitality. As he is a true native of

of the North, and very zealous for the honour of his country, and every thing that relates to it, it was impossible for me not to like a mixture, which had met with the highest approbation at Fortune's *, had been applauded to the skies by my Lord Kelly, and other celebrated knights of the trencher: and I could not but swallow, because it had received the sanction of the whole kingdom of Scotland. This was a *Hagis*; a dish not more remarkable or more disgusting to the palate, than in appearance. When I first cast my eye on it, I thought it resembled a bullock's paunch, which you often meet in the streets of London in a wheel barrow: and, on a nearer inspection, I found it really to be the stomach of a sheep, stuffed till it was as full as a foot ball. An incision being made in the side of it, the entrails burst forth, "*ceu rapidus montano flumine torrens*," and presented such a display of oatmeal, and sheep's liver, and lights, with a mofeta that accompanied them, that I could

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I

scarcely

* The name of a man who keeps a celebrated tavern in Edinburgh.

scarcely help thinking myself in the *Grotto del Cane*.

As I mentioned, my politeness got the better of my delicacy, and I was prevailed on to taste it; but I could go no farther: and, after a few encomiums on its being tender and savory, which I thought sufficient to shew that I was not wholly destitute of *Taste*, I turned a hungry face towards a large tureen in the middle, which the master of the feast called Cocky-leaky; and, with the appearance of luxury and glee in his countenance, extracted from a quantity of broth, in which it had been boiled with leeks, a large cock, which I dare say had been the herald of the morn for many a year. This, he exclaimed, would be exquisite, if the cook had taken care that the broth was sufficiently seasoned; and after he had tasted it, he declared that it exceeded his highest expectations. During this time, I found some of the company pay great attention; and, on the verdict being given, seemed rather impatient: but as I was a stranger, and had not blessed my appetite with a considerable degree of Haggis, my plate was filled first, and I began

began upon it, whilst their eyes were all fixed on me to hear me pronounce the sentence; which I did, indeed, in the words of the verdict, but with some reluctance; for it was so hard and tough, that it seemed to require the stomach of an ostrich to digest it: and I could not help thinking, that it would have cut a much better figure in a main than on a table, as I would have defied the best warrior cock that ever came victorious from the pit of battle, to have produced a breast more impenetrable, or a leg better fortified with spurs and sinews. But “it was admirable, it was the *Taste* ;” that was sufficient. The Scotchmen devoured it unmercifully, and the ladies enjoyed the broth.

I was next solicited to eat some sheep's head, which had raised my curiosity for some time to find out what it was; and on being told, I concluded it was the head of a black sheep, and, perhaps, on that account a rarity; for its appearance was so *sombre*, that otherwise it must have been dressed in the smoak-jack.

My being unwilling to be disappointed again, prevented my having resolution to venture on it: in order therefore to fill up the vacant interim, till a Solan Goose, which had been the cause of the invitation, should make its *entrée*, I enquired of my neighbour the manner of dressing this sheep's head; and, on account of his close attachment to his plate, it was with difficulty I squeezed from him, in half eaten words, that it was nothing but a plain-boiled, common sheep's head with the skin on, from which the wool had been singed, which was the cause of its dark complexion.

But behold the Goose! the Hags had been in *Taste*, the Cocky leeky had been in *the Taste*, and the goose was to be *au dernier gout*. To be brief, then, a part of the breast fell to my share, which was something better than a hern or a sea-gull; but had a strong, oily, unpalatable flavour; of a blackish colour, and so very tender, that it gave me the opportunity of putting a bit into the orifice of my stomach, which, by this time, began to be rapacious for want of something to devour. However, plenty

ty of good Claret and agreeable conversation made up other deficiencies; and I took my leave in very good humour, though heartily, praying never to be invited again to a dinner in the highest Taste, where I must sacrifice my own to conform to the caprice of some pampered glutton, whose want of *Taste* has been able to gain credit in the world, and set a fashion.

As I am on the subject of eating, I will finish this with mentioning three other dishes which are common in this country; Cabbiclow, Barley-broth, and Friar's chicken. The first is cod-fish salted for a short time, and not dried in the manner of common salt fish, and boiled with parsley and horse-radish.

They eat it with egg sauce, and it is extremely luscious and palatable. Barley-broth is beef stewed with a quantity of pearl barley and greens of different sorts: and the other is Chicken cut into small pieces, and boiled with parsley, cinnamon, and eggs, in strong beef soup. I know not what holy order may have had the reputation of discovering this last dish; but, from the

luxuriousness of it, it seems admirably adapted for the provision of a convent.

I remain, with best respects,

your ever devoted friend,

and obliged, humble servant,

LETTER

LETTER XX.

The Feudal System, and its Consequences.

To. R. D. Esq.

Edinburgh, February 9, 1775.

S I R,

I MAKE no doubt but you will agree with me in thinking, that the Feudal System was the most unfriendly one that could have been devised for the happiness of mankind. Without dwelling upon the baneful influence which it had over the morals of the people, in making them ever ready at the call of their Chieftains, for acts of violence and oppression, it is sufficiently against it to say, that it was totally subversive of industry and improvements of every kind. In all the countries where the peasants are subject to

this mode of government, they are fond of solitude, neglectful of themselves, and totally void of that active principle which leads men into public society, which animates them against every obstacle, and at length opens their way to riches. In all the northern parts, where a state of villanage exists to this day, the introduction of trade and agriculture have in vain been attempted: for what argument can persuade a man to be industrious, when he is liable every moment to be deprived of the reward of it? or what care will he take to improve a possession, the very tenure of which is precarious? Amongst all the later improvements that have been made in Germany, Denmark, and Russia, this right has been given up, and the Empress, who has given an asylum to all the fugitives from Poland, has encouraged the rise of agriculture, by introducing the English system of renting farms on lease.

Though this mode of government has long been abolished in Scotland, the people feel the effects of it to this day. In many parts of the Highlands, they are yet totally ignorant of all the arts of agriculture: they never think of manuring the ground; they do not attempt trying the
the

the different grasses on spots near their habitation, or of draining the wet parts, many of which are highly capable of cultivation, as they are entirely sheltered by the hills which rise above them; or even of taking the trouble to pick up the loose stones which lie every where under their feet, to make a fence. They live poor, as their fathers did before them, and nothing seems hereditary but idleness. They place their sole dependence on grazing, since this mode of farming can be pursued with scarce any trouble to themselves, as their cattle range about for food, while they throw themselves on the grass, and sleep by them.

As this system of government effectually prevented the labours of the husbandman during its continuance, it likewise deprived him of all attachment to his native country. Wherever he cast his eyes, he saw no works of his hands, no fruits of his industry, no scenes of his own creation, to claim his attention: all was a barren solitude, from which he could never change but for the better. It is from this principle they have become a nation of wanderers by profession. That the lower class of people in the Highlands

have no local attachments, the late numerous emigrations to America will sufficiently testify : and, probably, this is one of the least equivocal proofs that can be given of some great fault in the original plan of this kind of government, more than of any dislike to their present landlords, when a large body of people can by any means be induced to quit a country where they have been bred, and become adventurers : when they can be persuaded to forsake those known habitations, however poor, where they have passed their lives, and trust to the mercy of a country where they have no friends to receive them, and in which they have new settlements to form.

The inhabitants of the Lowlands have equally manifested that restless desire of travelling, which a want of employment at home naturally inspires. Go into what country you will, you always find Scotchmen. They penetrate into every climate : you meet with them in all the various departments of travellers, soldiers, merchants, adventurers, domestics. Consult the history of their own nation from the earliest period, and that of other nations, and you will find, that if any dangerous
and

and difficult enterprize has been undertaken, any uncommon proofs given of patience or activity, any new countries visited and improved, that a Scotchman has borne some share in the performance. If the Scotch are to be found guilty of being national, it is not that they are attached to this mountain or to that district, but that they are partial to each other. It is not that they love the country, but their friends. You will, however, imagine, from what I have said, that I by no means join in this charge against them; on the contrary, I think it has no foundation. It has been the illiberal and disgraceful principle of these times, to hold the Scotch deserving of every reproach, and to load them with all the invectives that either ill-manners or ill-will could suggest. They have been abused, not because they were really bad men, but Scotchmen, as if climate inferred infamy. And, if after all this, some Scotchman, as was very natural, not entirely callous to this treatment of his countrymen, arose to justify them; the cry immediately was, he was national.— Lord Bute was supposed to be the fountain of all this evil: he probably thought it was necessary to take some notice of his
his

his friends in their adversity. There was, however, this to be said of it, that as the name of Scotchman was no absolute recommendation, he must have had some merit of his own; whereas an Englishman has often been taken notice of, merely for being such.

But what merits observation amongst this people most is, that though they are lazy and improvident at home, though they discover a total dislike and contempt of labour in their own country, the very same men become the most industrious and frugal abroad, and evince a capacity and an invention worthy the imitation of all nations. It is in their own climate alone that their abilities seem to lie dormant; they wait for other suns to call them forth into life, and to give animation to their sleeping faculties. The workmen of this country are esteemed throughout Europe for their peculiar sobriety and attention: and the military profession all allow, that no soldiers whatever are more courageous, or more patient of fatigue in war: none that are more obedient in peace, or that make a better appearance with the small pittance, which the pay of a common soldier allows him.

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The most ingenious artists now in London are Scotchmen, and are as remarkable for the diligence with which they pursue their trade, as they are for the many admirable improvements they have made in its various branches. All who have seen Mr. Brodie's manufactures in cast iron, and Mr. Tassie's composition in imitation of the *antique*, will join in the truth of this observation : and what is equally to their credit, you see no assumed airs of importance, no consciousness of their own abilities ; but a civility, and an attention in every thing. The most ingenious artificer now in Paris is a Scotchman. He begged his bread from the northernmost part of the Highlands up to London, where, after several progressive steps of wretchedness and misery, he was admitted to sweep the shop of a Jeweller. By a long course of attentive observation, he obtained some little insight into the rudiments of the business ; and having always laid up very carefully what his civility to the customers of the shop got him, he at last scraped together a few pounds. With this he travelled to Paris, where he was taken by a Jeweller of some eminence. His master, who observed his honesty and abilities,

abilities, furnished him with five hundred crowns, when his time of apprenticeship expired ; and from this small sum, by a gradual increase of business, which his taste in designs, and his elegance in working, has procured him, he is become one of the first tradesmen in Paris.

Had this man met with encouragement at home, it is more than probable, that he never would have left his native country : and the same abilities, which made him distinguished in this business, would have made him equally so in one more useful to society.

Thus destructive has been the influence of a System of Government, which once kept the greatest part of Europe in a subjection as disgraceful to the natural freedom of society, as it was unfavourable to the industry of individuals. Those ingenious natives, who could not expect any advantages at home, were obliged to seek those rewards abroad, which their own country denied to them : and, probably, a century ago, Scotland was the only kingdom in Europe, which had not been benefitted by the labours of Scotchmen.

In

In my next letter I will send you an account of what improvements have been lately made in this country, and which, though at present in their infancy, are an earnest of their future excellence.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

The different Manufactures of Scotland.

To R. D. Esq.

Edinburgh, February 18, 1775.

S I R,

WITHIN these few years Scotland has worn a very different appearance from what it formerly did; and though, as yet, it cannot vie with the later and more luxurious improvements of some nations, it now has the ample means of furnishing employment for the greatest part of its own inhabitants. The mechanic Arts, Trade, Agriculture, Manufactories, are no longer the offspring of a day, or scarce conscious of their existence, but wear the promising marks of future vigour and stability.

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The manufactories, now established in many parts of this country, are all in a very flourishing condition: that for the making tapes, threads, garters, &c. at Glasgow, has not only enriched its owners, but been the means of breaking up most of the same sort in England. The cheapness of labour here has enabled the proprietors to undersell the English above five *per cent.* and as they equal the English tapes in colour and quality, all the London merchants almost now buy from hence. But besides this branch of wholesale trade, there is a species of retail which, in the aggregate, is full as profitable, or more so; and which, though it may not be considered in the great scale of business, is still the best branch of it: these are all the persons who, under the denomination of Pedlars, travel through different countries, and, being most of them Scotchmen, dispose of these articles to the lower classes of people, at a great profit to themselves, as well as ultimately enriching their own country.

The manufactory of Stockings in the country about Aberdeen is now very great, and finds employment for many thousands, who

who are as frugal as they are industrious ; for while they are furnishing many parts of Europe with stockings, they themselves go without them. Almost every part of every family is engaged in this branch of business, from the master of the whole to the smallest children in it.

The Linen trade, which seems the favourite one in Scotland, has had great additions and improvements lately made to it, and is still increasing : had the late design here been carried into act of Parliament, this business would have been put on the most reasonable footing, and would have extended its sale much beyond the present limits. A large hall, like those in Leeds, and some other places in England, has been erected in this town for the reception of linen, and to accommodate the purchasers. The late Lord Milton interested himself much in the success of this trade, and, by many judicious regulations, has contributed much to its present state. But the Irish, who excel the Scotch in all the finer linens, must always keep them down : and it is from this superiority in particular, that the Scotch ought to be convinced, that the linen manufactory should not be the only object of their
attention,

attention. At best it can have but a divided sale in England, and in all probability the worst share. The Scotch, however, excel the Irish in that species of linen which is calculated for the table: the strength and beauty of the interwoven patterns in this article, exceed any thing the Irish have produced. Formerly the Scotch used to send some of their finest linens to be bleached at Haerlem in Holland; but they found it did not answer the expence of it; as the freight, and other articles, made it dearer by ten pence a yard: they now bleach it entirely amongst themselves; and as they have good water and good grounds, I see no reason for sending it from home.

But their chief manufactory, and that on which, in my opinion, the Scotch ought to rely, is their Carpets; many other countries will rival, if not exceed them, in their other branches; but in this they are without a competitor. In many articles their success hitherto has been owing to the cheapness of their labour: in this its excellence alone has been its best recommendation.

The

The sale which these Carpets meet with in England is astonishing: you find them in every house, from the highest to the lowest, as they are calculated to suit that class of people who wish for the conveniencies of life, but who cannot afford the extravagant prices of Wilton, Axminster, and other more expensive manufactories. They have been, in a great measure, the means of rendering the houses here so comfortable, and are the best securities against stone buildings, stone stair-cases, and a cold climate. As yet their artists have not arrived at much elegance in the design or brilliancy of colour: but these improvements follow of course; the embellishments of art and luxury always succeed to convenience.

In some pieces that I have seen, which have been made by particular orders, great taste has been shewn: a proof that an idea, as yet, probably, in its infancy, has been started of improvements in this article. When those improvements take place, and the period will not be far distant, this manufactory may be as much distinguished
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ed for its elegance, and it is now for its goodness.

An attempt has been made to introduce a manufactory of Cambrick, adjoining to Edinburgh; but without much success: It is not so fine, by many degrees, as the French; and, I am informed, not near so durable. It likewise loses its colour in washing. A few people who travelled here from Picardy, brought this along with them; but, unhappily, though they brought the art of making it, they could not bring the materials. These people, however, deserve encouragement: the man who hazards his fortune, and probably his life, by carrying over an art from his own country into another, should it even fail of success, is still deserving of reward from the country he intended to benefit.

It is from these means that exclusive trades can never be long carried on. What has been found to be beneficial in one country, will always be the object of desire in another; and there are always men to be met with, who, from pecuniary advantages, may be drawn over to introduce it. Inflict personal or other punishments as you will, the artificer who has
not

not sufficient employment at home, will always go where he can live best, and act the master. It is from this general dispersion of trade and manufactories in every country, that immense wealth is no longer to be expected by any one in prejudice of all the rest. The Dutch, who carried this point higher than any other nation, have already seen the best days of their commerce, and feel their decline. The manufactories of Delft, which once supplied all Europe, do not at present supply even themselves: they bring over from England the Queen's Ware, the improvement of their own idea. Some other country may put an end to ours in its turn. What right have we then to complain of the instability of one man's fortune, when the great manufactures of a nation, when the trade of a whole country, are thus subject to vicissitudes? There is this consolation left us, that the steps are slowly taken, and that many generations must pass away in the progress of each.

Those people, however, are the most happy, who live in that brightest period of every government, when arts and sciences, when luxury and opulence, when improvements

ments of every kind, are at their height :
who partake of these blessings, and die be-
fore their decline.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XXII.

The Scotch Booksellers; their Publications, &c.

To R. D. Esq;

Edinburgh, February 23, 1775.

S I R,

THE most profitable trade now in Edinburgh appears to be that of a bookseller. Of all the other advantageous branches this place has only received a part in conjunction with many other towns in Scotland; but they have appropriated this business at present entirely to themselves. If I am well informed, many thousand volumes are annually printed in this place, and sold in London or elsewhere. The cheapness of labour here, when compared with London, induces many Scotch Booksellers who reside there, to have

have their books printed at Edinburgh, and then sent to them ; which they find much better than printing at their own shops : and for this purpose, many of them have partners in this place.

Some years ago the Printing-office at Glasgow was a formidable rival to that at Edinburgh ; and had the two celebrated Printers there pursued their business, they might have carried away the whole trade of Scotland to themselves. But, alas ! “ Men are but men,” as Tristram Shandy observes, “ and the best have their “ weaknesses.” An unfortunate desire seized these two gentlemen of instituting an academy of painting, and of buying a collection of pictures ; forgetting that the place where this academy was to be instituted was amongst a society of tradesmen, who would throw away no money on such subjects. With this idea they bought paintings which no body else will buy again, and which now lie upon their hands in high preservation. During the rage of this fancy, they forgot their former business, and neglected an art which, from their editions of Homer and Milton, might have made them immortal, to run

after paltry copies of good paintings, which they had been informed were originals.

When I visited these gentlemen, I had heard of their Printing, but never of their Academy. It was in vain that I asked for books; I had always a picture thrust into my hand; and like Boniface, though they had nothing in print worth notice, they said they could shew me a delicate engraving. You may well imagine that this ambition has prevented their former success; for though Poetry and Painting may be sister arts, I never heard that Painting and Printing were of the same family; if they are, their interests have been very opposite.

Banished from Glasgow, this trade has settled at Edinburgh, and by the ingenuity and application of those who are engaged in it, has been brought to great perfection. I mean that perfection which includes every requisite in a book for the smallest price possible.

A bookseller in this city, who is not only a polite man, but a man of letters, is now printing a complete set of the English Classics in duodecimo; which, with the addition of a very handsome binding, amount

amount only to eighteen pence a volume. It is such productions as these that do honour to a country; and I confess I feel a pleasure in reflecting that this has been the work of a Scotch Bookseller, as it seems some sort of compensation for the blow which was given by their means to literature in general.

In regard to this decision, so much has already been said upon it, as well as written; so many judicious arguments advanced on both sides, during the long trial it gave rise to, that no new light could be thrown upon the subject. But I cannot help declaring that I think it was the most unfortunate decision ever pronounced by a court of judicature. You will easily believe that I am not led away by any partiality to this or that Bookseller: I think both the Scotch and the English ones acted as any other people would have acted, who had very important interests at stake.

But without considering the right which any act of Parliament has to deprive a man of his own private property, whatever that property may be, I am sorry, for the sake of literature, that such

a decision was ever given; and I cannot but feel for the losses which a number of learned and ingenious men must feel, whose works have frequently been their only support.

The rewards of literary merit have always been, comparatively, too small. A man of abilities, for instance, in the profession of Law or Physic, who benefits only individuals, and whose abilities, generally speaking, are employed as much to the prejudice as the advantage of mankind, shall receive many thousands a year: while another man, whose education has been equally expensive to him, whose labours are not confined to one age or country, whose works must have an useful tendency, or the public would discourage them, such a man shall lead a life devoted to study and confinement, while the only recompence he receives for all his toils shall be a bare subsistence.

There never was an instance of a man acquiring a fortune by the sale of his writings: there are a thousand, in which the most ingenious men have languished during their whole lives in poverty and obscurity. We have had too many unfortunate instances

stances in our own country, to make it necessary to quote the examples of poor Camoens or Bentivoglio; though the fate of this latter is truly singular: — The Comedies which he wrote, and which are an honour to the Italian language, are a sufficient proof of his abilities.

He dissipated, as his story tells us, a large fortune in various acts of charity; and becoming himself an object of compassion in his old age, he was refused admittance into an hospital which he had erected for the benefit of others. Modern times can shew equal ingenuity on the one hand, and equal ingratitude on the other.

The late Mr. Smollet, whose abilities every one is acquainted with, wrote for a number of years without procuring to himself any thing more than a livelihood: And Dr. Goldsmith, whose poverty obliged him to write so much and so variously, that, had he lived many years longer, in all probability his imagination and his subsistence would have failed together, found that all his talents could barely secure him from indigence: his whole life was a tissue of distress and genius, of merit and suffering.

It is from these motives that I wish for every encouragement to be given to Authors; and there was no other way of doing it effectually than by affixing every possible degree of value to their works.

Booksellers cannot be blamed for not giving the same price for a lease of fourteen years, that they would for the perpetuity: but what is peculiarly hard is, that this act falls the heaviest on the most ingenious men. Those who write for the day are also forgotten with the day: their labours can expect no longer date. But there are men of real genius, many of which this country can boast, whose works will survive that period, yet become circumscribed by these limits, and lose half their value.

From this decision the Scotch Booksellers may date the æra of their success in this trade: for they will always flourish so long as the comparative cheapness of their workmen enables them to undersell the London Bookseller with profit to themselves. Hitherto they have printed those authors only whose right was expired to the proprietors; as all the late
works

works of their own writers have been bought and printed in London; and, indeed, will always be so, while the best prices are given them.

But a trade which does not depend entirely on its own merit, but on the small expence at which its articles are procured, can only succeed so long as those articles continue cheap. Holland, which once supplied the greatest part of Europe, failed in that branch as soon as the paper became cheaper in France than in their own country.

Though the Scotch are certainly a very ingenious people, and in general good writers, you see very few publications make their appearance. You are pestered with none of those weekly, daily, and almost hourly pamphlets, which every where meet one's eye in London, under the names of Nuptial Elegies, Sentimental Scruples, Juvenile Poems, Amorous Epistles, and a thousand others of the same ingenious and tender natures.

Such delicate productions would expire in this cold climate, as they owe their birth to idle hours and mild skies.

The only publications which appear constantly are the News-papers, a Magazine, and a Review, which are executed nearly in the same style as those in London.

Not long ago, a little pamphlet made its appearance, complaining of some abuses committed in the management, or rather mismanagement of an hospital here, and dedicated to the most impudent man alive. You will confess that this title was rather disputable. One gentleman, however, by being very angry, shewed he had some right to the dedication, from thus openly asserting his claim to it.

How happy would it be for society, if some one could always be found to avow his right to all those defamatory invectives, those allegories of abuse, which are frequently lavished on individuals by anonymous writers, and which terrify a thousand innocent people, but leave the guilty unknown!

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

Some Observations on the Kirk, and Devotion of the People, English Chapel, &c.

To T. M. Esq;

Edinburgh, March 3, 1775.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE been now resident in this city so considerable a time, that I begin to look on myself, and indeed wish to be thought by the inhabitants of it, almost a native of the country. In all respects I have endeavoured to accommodate myself to their manners and customs, as, in my opinion, every stranger ought to do in a foreign climate; and am become so habituated to them, that I consider them as my own.

It gives me much concern to inform you, there are already in this place more clergymen of the church of England, than are necessary to perform the duty required; that it will be to no purpose for your friend to come to settle here in expectation of employment in his function. There are at present six or seven, and some without any duty, occasioned by a schism amongst them, and the governors of the New Chapel. But the discarded gentlemen say, the governors have no right to turn them out, *et adhuc sub judice lis est*. I am the more sorry to send you this unfavourable account, since I am sure your friend would be no unacceptable addition to them, as there is not one who can be called a good reader, or an orator in the pulpit; so far from it, that I never attended to more insignificant, unprofitable discourses in any church. Even the Presbyterians, who preach without book, and consequently ought to have every allowance made them, excel them in such a manner, that I am astonished any reasonable man, whatever may be the mode of worship in his own country, should think it worth his time to listen to them.

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The Ministers of the Church of Scotland assume a virtue, if they have it not; and I must say for them, (though it is incredible what nonsense I have sometimes heard from their pulpits) that they command attention, even when you are shocked at the absurdity of their language: whereas those of the English Chapel, drone out their common-place precepts of morality with so much coldness and indifference, that it is with difficulty you can yawn out a sermon. Indeed, this real or pretended godliness is not confined to the Ministers of the Church of Scotland; but is universal, especially on a Sabbath.—During the time of Kirk, you scarcely see any body in the streets, or loitering away the time of prayer in wantonness and excess: though, at other times, and even then in private, there is no crime they would scruple to commit. To be seen in the street after the summons of the bell, or to read any book on a Sunday which has no relation to religion, seems wicked and abominable to the most abandoned. You must acknowledge, it redounds greatly to the credit of Presbyterianism, that the mask of religion should bear so strong a resemblance to the reality;

ty ; for, in general, good consequences must arise from it. " I never can imagine but that the person, who lays so much stress upon the apparent and outward part of his duty, must have a sufficient inward sense of it, as would frequently lead him to the discharge and observance of those offices which can only arise from the heart, and which cannot be supposed to spring from a desire of applause or profit." But you may object, that this parade of goodness is greatly instrumental to hypocrisy and deceit. Perhaps it may in some measure : but surely the evil, which may arise from that, is abundantly counter-balanced by the advantages derived from it to society, if it is only in keeping the conscience awake, that silent monitor of what is good and right. Whereas, in London, what other difference do the common people make in Sunday, except in the excess of idleness and riot ? But far be it from me to say, that the Scotch nation have more real religion than the English : I only affirm, let their principles be what they may, there is a greater appearance of regard to public worship, and more respect paid to the Sabbath. I must not forget to mention the extraordinary neatness and simplicity of
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of dress, which distinguish them at this time of public prayer. The poorest cottager, with his best face, puts on his best apparel, as it were, to present himself at the throne of mercy, a pure and unpolluted sacrifice. The Kirks also, in general, are plain, unadorned, and such large edifices, that they contain the most numerous congregations. I am told, the Trone Church would hold, with ease, at least fifteen hundred persons.

With respect to their discourses from the pulpit, which are delivered as it were by inspiration, was I to speak in dispraise of them, you might think, perhaps, I was too much bigotted in favour of the Church of England, to give an impartial account; I shall only inform you, therefore, that their sermons are longer and not so correct as those of our clergymen; but better calculated for the generality of congregations; being addressed more to the passions, and never on any abstract topics of divinity, which are unintelligible to the common people. Indeed this may be one reason why the common people so universally frequent the Kirk; for if they gain no instruction, they are sure to be entertained, and have their understandings flattered.

tered. It is really a curious sight to behold, at the conclusion of the meeting, the inundation of the people that flow from the Kirks, on account of their being so crowded. I have seen the High Street in Edinburgh, which is no inconsiderable one, from having the appearance of a deserted place, so "thronged," as they call it, with people in ten minutes, that it was nearly impossible to pass by.

It would be needless for me to say any thing concerning the tenets of the Presbyterians, or their mode of worship to you, who must be so much better acquainted with them : I have, therefore, taken the liberty, as I know you are a stranger to Scotland, to mention those circumstances only, which may not have come within your hearing, as they relate, perhaps, solely to the Presbyterians in this country.

The new English Chapel is a neat, elegant building, but hardly large enough for the Members of the Church of England, who are constant inhabitants of this City. The architect has been so unfortunate in his position of the pulpit, that, in particular places, the voice of the
preacher

preacher is totally confounded by the echo.
An excellent organ attracts by its novelty,
as nothing of that kind is admitted in the
Kirks.

I am your obliged friend, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XXIV.

On the Dress of the better Sort of the Inhabitants of Edinburgh.

To Miss Sophia D——.

Edinburgh, March 6, 1775.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I RECEIVED your kind letter; am sensible of the obligation I owe you for it, and take this first opportunity of discharging my debt as well as I am able; though I am sorry to say, I must act after the manner of all other bankrupts, and pay you but a part of the whole.

The entertainment which you afforded me by your descriptions, and your drawing of the present mode of dressing the hair,

hair, I was not so much a miser as to keep to myself. It gives me much surprise to find the extravagance of the ladies head dress still increases; as I imagined it had been before elevated to a degree, that must have made it inconvenient and troublesome.

Because, for instance, the Dutchess of D—— has a head capable of bearing its weight, and features, complexion, and figure, which become a towering plume of party coloured feathers, I dare say there will not be a face ever so ill-favoured, a skin of the coarsest grain, or a distorted shape in the Pantheon for the remainder of the winter, without this aërial ornament. The English women are not Amazonian enough in general to make them look proportionate or graceful; for they certainly have a masculine appearance, and give you the idea of a helmet. A short woman in this disguise must put you in mind of the armed head that makes so formidable a figure among the ghosts in Macbeth. But I know you will elude all I can urge, by saying it is the Fashion, which must be conformed to, and which makes every thing agreeable. I grant it in some measure. Pleasure is
what

what we all so stedfastly pursue, that there needs only Fashion to give any thing that name; and the desire of imitation will make it followed, till the force of custom has rendered it agreeable. But still I have no notion of an universal fashion. I would have every one suit her height, colour, and dimensions, and then I should have no objection to feathers, or to see a gigantic woman nodding with the tail of an ostrich, whilst the beautiful conciseness of Miss S——'s person would confine itself to the modest plumage of the turtle dove. Indeed, I am so far from looking with perfect dislike on this mode of wearing feathers, that I think it might be made of great utility to our sex, if the ladies would but choose the feathers of such birds as in some measure were emblematical of their dispositions or rank. Suppose her Majesty, for instance, were to appear at court with the feathers of the princely eagle, whilst my lady Mayores assumed the pompous insignificance of the turkey cock—Coquets might be furnished from the species of parrots—the goose might fit out the old maid; the peacock vindicate the dowager; whilst the wanton sparkling widow might mourn under the umbrage of the
raven

raven or the magpye. But you ask me, if this fashion has extended its flight this way ? I am happy to tell you, it has not ; though I must think it would be more applicable to the beauty of this country, than to that of ours.

The women here do not so readily adopt any trifling fashion from London. They conform themselves much more to the manners and taste of Paris, with which they have as constant a communication as with England. The ladies in Edinburgh dress, in general, with more elegance, and in a way better accommodated to their persons, size, and shape, than most of the European nations ; whilst they are peculiarly attentive to the nature of their climate and seasons, as well as to their age, after the manner of the French. You never see the mortifying spectacle of an old woman displayed in all the shew and vanity of a boarding school Miss ; or the widowed wife of nineteen assuming the air and dress of an antient married matron, in order to adapt herself to the age of a decrepid and peevish husband—In a morning also their dress is equally becoming ; their dishabille is never negligent and loose, but neat
and

and plain, with a degree of smartness and elegance; and a genius for dress even then discovers itself, just as you may see the masterly strokes of a poet, in two or three unpremeditated extempore verses. But I wish I could say as much for the men: they neither take so much care of their persons or appearance; nor have they half the taste in their dress that the Ladies have, who choose the most becoming fashions from London and Paris, and form one of their own, more graceful, perhaps, than either. But the Gentlemen neither know how, nor are studious of setting off their figure to advantage. In the politest assemblies in this City, you rarely see a gentleman well dressed: In those that think themselves the best, there is always some deficiency; whilst you will not find one Lady without every assistance of ornament and art; and an ill-dressed Lady is as great a novelty as an ill-bred one.

But however they may be indebted to this external shew, or whatever they may have borrowed from the French, they derive none of their beauty from paint, nor have they had folly enough to imitate that nation in this absurd fashion. Indeed, neither

ther their colour nor complexion stand in need of it; for I know not where they will find their equals in either. But if that was a reason, we should not see so many charming faces concealed by it in London, where it often happens that, under this disguise, a more beautiful countenance is hid, than that which is presented to the public. For my own part, I have such a detestation of this species of painting, that I would rather behold the most ugly, mis-shapen face as God made it, than rendered comely and inanimate by this plastering of art. One may as well salute a picture or a statue. None but a Pygmalion could fall in love with them. Besides, this fashion has not even that to recommend it, which is common to all others, how absurd soever, viz. of being of advantage to some trade or commerce. If all the Ladies in a city were to paint, one Perfume shop might supply them all, and have no great business: whereas the difference of shape, figure, and colour of cloaths, furnish many manufacturers with employ, and the industrious artificer with an honest livelihood. In this case the constant change of fashions is of much utility to a country: though I think there is nothing that is a greater proof of the
natural

natural instability of our minds and opinions, or that shews in a clearer light the caprice and fickleness of human nature. One could hardly imagine a rational creature should think it worth while to concern himself with such trifles; or that a Being, whose life is but a span, should spend the few moments allotted him, in altering the dimensions of his habit, or changing, perhaps, only the form of his hat: but such is our constitution;—We fluctuate between various inclinations—Every day a new whim: our humour keeps motion with the time, and we follow the inclination of our fancy according as we are wafted by the breath of occasion. But I already hear you say, “And what art thou, poor moralizer?” No solitary fly, I assure you. I am here in the midst of entertainment, noise, and company; and would not change my situation, unless for the happiness of a conversation with you, for the profit of half the land that is between us.

After all this, you will find yourself highly mistaken in your opinion of this nation and its manners: and I cannot but tell you, you are not more so in any particular, than in your notions concerning
their

their dress. You think also that their hair is inclinable to red. The womens hair is either a dark brown, or perfectly red, which I esteem a very beautiful colour, and is that which in antient times was so admired, received the appellation of golden, and was given by way of distinction to a Pallas or a Juno. I am sorry to say the Ladies here often conceal it by powder, having the same idea of it that you have, and making no difference between it, and that sandy coloured red, which, of all hair, is the most disagreeable and unbecoming. In most respects they dress their hair with great elegance and propriety, in no extremes, neither too elevated nor too depressed, but in that just proportioned medium, which is always the result of taste and judgment. As to hoops, they seldom use them, and add very little to their height by the heels of their shoes. The Gentlemen, after the custom of the French, wear their hair in bags, especially the Advocates and Professors of the College, who commonly dress in black. With respect to cloaths, as I said before, I cannot speak in great praise of them; and they have the worst taylors, perhaps, in the world.

And

And now, my dear Sophia, I must wish you farewell. Be assured, I can find no greater pleasure than in receiving your letters, with which I hope you will be so kind as to indulge me whenever you have an idle hour; as I am, with the truest sincerity and friendship,

Your ever affectionate,

and obliged humble servant.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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